The Able Child - The Forgotten Special Need?

An Investigation into the Identification and Development of Able and Talented Children in the Secondary School.

by

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June 2001

This dissertation is submitted in part fulfilment of the MA (Ed) course at the University of Wales Institute Cardiff.
Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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Date ........................................

STATEMENT 1

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

........................................ (insert MA, MSc, MBA etc, as appropriate)

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Date ........................................

STATEMENT 2

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work / investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Abstract

Since the Warnock Report of 1978, tremendous advances have been made regarding support and development for pupils with learning difficulties. During this time, however, the special learning needs of able and talented pupils at the other end of the education spectrum, have been widely neglected.

This research study focuses on identification, monitoring and development of learning provision at a single comprehensive school. 67 teaching staff from four schools (two comprehensive, and two primary schools) comprise the research sample. Initially, a quantitative survey gathered data on respondents' perceptions of able and talented pupils; their reasons for or against providing specialist support and the quality of current provision. Semi-structured interviews; multiple intelligence identification tests and case study observations probe these issues in more depth and from a qualitative perspective.

Results show a good level of awareness regarding able and talented pupils, together with widespread support in favour of providing specialist support to meet learning needs. However, little agreement exists regarding application of standardised criteria for identifying these pupils, the means of identification; choice of teaching groups, and the learning and teaching processes required to challenge and inspire these pupils.

There emerges a clear need to extend and formalise this area of provision, widen peoples' perceptions relating to able and talented pupils, and put in place a strategy that not only identifies, but fully supports and monitors pupil progress.

This research recommends the appointment of a co-ordinator to oversee the development of school policy provision, act as a central source for the collection, analysis and dissemination of pupil data and instigate strategies designed to challenge and inspire able and talented pupils, and develop them to their full potential.
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<td>ACCAC</td>
<td>Awdurdod Cymwysterau Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACN</td>
<td>Able Child Nominee</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEST</td>
<td>Building Excellent Schools Together</td>
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<td>CATS</td>
<td>Cognitive Abilities Tests</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoP</td>
<td>Code of Practice</td>
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<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
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<td>DfEE</td>
<td>Department for Education and Employment</td>
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<td>HCSC</td>
<td>House of Commons Select Committee</td>
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<td>HMI</td>
<td>Her Majesties Inspectorate</td>
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<td>INSET</td>
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<td>LEA</td>
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<td>MA</td>
<td>Mixed Ability</td>
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<td>MI</td>
<td>Multiple Intelligence Theory</td>
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<td>NACCCE</td>
<td>National Advisory Committee on Creative, Cultural Education</td>
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<td>NAGC</td>
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<td>NC</td>
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<td>OFSTED</td>
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<td>QTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEN</td>
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<td>SENCO</td>
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<td>SPSS</td>
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<td>ST</td>
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<td>Teacher Training Agency</td>
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Part One

The Research Proposal and Outline
1.1 The Research Statement

We deplore the view that children of high ability need little support and can easily cope, simply because of their ability. We must ensure good minds, and precious assets, are cherished and encouraged, not neglected.

-Malcolm Wicks: Chairman of the House of Commons Select Committee on Highly Able Children, (1998-9)

The raising of standards in education has been a key feature of successive government legislation and a major education focus for the last two decades. Numerous whole school policy initiatives, such as the National Curriculum (NC) 1988, the special education needs (SEN) Code of Practice (CoP) 1994, and the more recent League Performance tables have all sought to address the issue of underachievement by raising standards across the education spectrum, 5 - 18. However, during this time, very little attention has been paid to the needs of that small minority of pupils who show natural talents and an ability to succeed, those who need challenge and stimulation in order to realise their full potential; those pupils at risk of becoming the forgotten special need.

The overriding purpose of this research study is to focus on the issues of definition, identification and provision for able and talented pupils within the context of today's education climate, and to investigate the extent to which schools are able to nurture and develop such pupils as active life long learners, within the academic confines that are placed upon them.

This research project focuses principally upon one large comprehensive secondary school (School A), its policies and work relating to able and talented children.
To establish an indicator for its success, the quality of provision offered by another local comprehensive, and two feeder primary schools will be considered. Conclusions drawn from this research will, therefore, only reflect provision with the microcosm of a single unitary authority. Larger, national generalisations about able and talented children may not be possible from such a small scale investigation.

A number of interrelated issues arise from the research statement:

- How much emphasis is currently placed on developing the able and talented children in our schools?
- Is there a standard definition, regarding use of the terms such as able, talented, gifted children?
- What methods of identification are used to highlight able children?
- What is the extent of provision offered by schools to cater for the needs of these children, and indeed, what is School A's current position regarding provision for able and talented children?
- In relation to the work of School A, what improvements to current practice are possible/desirable?

In the absence of a consensus definition, the terms 'able' and 'talented' have been selected as most appropriate for use in this research, to reflect both the multi-faceted nature of this issue, and provide a broad base upon which identification and provision strategies for School A can be developed later in this research.
1.2 Aims and Justification

In order to address these issues, this study will investigate the following three research aims under the headings of: Identification, Provision and Policy.

Aim One: Identification

The principal objective of this study is to investigate the range and nature of School A's focus regarding able and talented children. By means of a comprehensive review of literature, the definition of what is meant by able and talented children together with strategies by which they can be identified, are discussed, both within current and historical educational contexts.

Justification

The literature review suggests that although the issue of the able child has been an emerging area for educational researchers for many years now, it is only very recently that the government has made any significant moves toward supporting and developing able and talented children. It is therefore a reasonable hypothesis that provision for these children is still very much in a developmental phase.

Aim Two: Provision

Discussions focus on the provision and teaching strategies that exist within the school environment to meet the needs of able and talented children and help them reach their full potential. The nature and status of the provision offered by School A will be discussed and compared with that offered by a small number of comparable local schools, to highlight and discuss areas of improvement to practice.
Justification

In order to meet the identified able children and their individual learning needs, it will be necessary to analyse current working practices and, where any shortcomings exist, develop and implement whole school or specialist teaching strategies that both meet and challenge the emerging needs of the able children.

Aim Three : Policy

Having outlined the current status pertaining to School A, it is the function of this aim to look forward by establishing a whole school policy and effective methods of provision for developing and nurturing able and talented children.

Justification

The needs of all pupils within a school are of paramount importance. The SEN pupil with learning, physical or sensory difficulties; the C/D grade borderline candidate and the underachiever have all featured heavily in recent educational debate and legislation. Aim three's directive is, in the absence of any direct government legislation, to ensure that the special educational needs and requirements of the able child are not overlooked or forgotten, but rather identified and developed according to need.
1.3. The Rationale

The issue of how to identify and provide for able and talented children, has been of keen interest to researchers, such as George, Leyden and Freeman for many years now. They all share the view that it is time, "...to raise the awareness of teachers and parents to the fact that there are (able) children underachieving in our schools, and not fulfilling their considerable potential." (George, D. 1998, p. vii).

Since 1973, following the publication of the Warnock Report, in 1978 [HMSO, Cmnd 7212] and subsequent government legislation, in the form of the Education Act (1993), and The Code of Practice: On the Development of Special Needs, (1994), considerable progress has been made regarding identification of, and provision for, children with educational learning difficulties. Yet, surprisingly, during this time little or no attention has been paid to the special education needs demanded by able and talented pupils, an issue also highlighted by George (1998, p vi), who states, "...a great deal of time energy and money has been spent on children with other special needs, whereas, the needs of children with high ability may have been relatively neglected". If anything, the recent historical context regarding education legislation has only served to undermine the profile and position of able and talented pupils in our schools. Young and Tyre (1992) refer to the introduction of nationwide comprehensive education in Government Circular 10/65 as a major watershed in establishing today's current position. They argue that, "...following the abolition of the 11+ many saw the disappearance of grammar schools as the removal of opportunities for the academically able". This is an argument supported by the HMI Report, Gifted Children in Middle and Comprehensive Secondary Schools (1977), which concluded that many new comprehensive schools declined to identify 'gifted'
children on the basis that, "...we've only just come from a selective system ...The gifted can look after themselves" (pp 8-9)

With the advent of comprehensive education, the issues of streaming, setting and mixed ability came to the forefront of the educational debate. During this time many researchers, including Leyden (1990, p.72), argued that, as a result of mixed ability teaching in particular, many teachers directed the learning focus of their lessons to the mid range ability pupils, thus, "the needs of the most able...are not being fully met". Even today this debate continues. As Kirby, (1996, p.2) points out, "With so many demands on school resources today, spending time on a programme to support able pupils might seem difficult to justify. Often it is the pupil with most ability who is seen as least likely to require additional teacher input or extra resources."

Despite the large amount of research literature calling for improvements to the provision for able and talented children, it was not until very recently that the government, through the work of the House of Commons Select Committee Report on Highly Able Children (1999, p.1), finally declared its intention to, "take a greater interest in the education of the highly able student in schools today, on the grounds that, able children can, ...no longer get by on their own". The report highlighted the government's new Excellence in Cities initiative, and for the needs of able and talented children to be further developed through the work of, "the DFEE and other national agencies, such as The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and the Teacher Training Agency (TTA)" (p.1). In this the government echo the views held by George, who in 1991 argued that,"OFSTED inspections, education reforms and HMI reviews" should form the framework for development and progress in this area of debate.
The contextual significance for this research project is twofold: firstly, the historical position and changing perspective of the able child within the education system following the introduction of comprehensive education; and secondly, the need to ensure that these pupils receive the support and provision needed to help them function as proactive, life long learners in today's rapidly changing, demanding society. As George, (1998,p.vi) argues, "... Many, though not all gifted children, have special needs and special problems. They also have special, sometimes immense talent to give to society, to help prepare tomorrow's leaders ...a major objective of education for the more able is to recognise and foster this special ability." It is within this context that this study will investigate the work of school A as a provider for able and talented children.

Situated in South Wales, School A currently has some (1,200) pupils on roll and a teaching / support staff of (74). It is a rather unique school, in that since 1963 and 1983 respectively, it has housed hearing impaired and physically disabled units, which now accept some (40) pupils from the local and neighbouring education authorities. It is the only school in its Local Education Authority (LEA) to offer such provision. The school has benefited enormously from the SEN legislation since Warnock. Pupils on all stages of the SEN Code of Practice comprise between 18 - 20 % of the total school population, and the school has recently been cited in the BEST Document: The BEST for Special Education, (1997). The school has naturally focused intently on developing a high level of SEN support and provision to what is a large and extremely diverse SEN community. From this context, the extent to which the special needs of able and talented pupils have been pursued and nurtured now arises as an important research issue.
In summary, the potential benefits of this research are:

- To be able to define the terms able and talented within the context of school A.
- To be able to assess the current level of support offered to able and talented pupils in School A.
- To be able to offer suggestions for improvement to current practice at School A, leading to the production of a whole school policy which highlights both the issues of identification and provision for these pupils.
Research Timetable

August 2000
Area of study and title defined. Availability of literature and school support assessed.

Mid September
Research Statement and Aims complete. Initial Research Methodology considered. Literature Review commenced.

End October
First draft of Part One completed and submitted. Methods of data collection considered and discussed with tutor.

Early November
Literature Review continuing, both hardcopy texts and journals, also internet and education databases. Questionnaire designs completed. Semi-Structured Interview questions decided upon.

Mid November
Questionnaires piloted and results considered. Contact made with schools chosen to help with study and appointments made for initial discussions.

End November
Questionnaires handed out. First draft of Methodology completed and submitted to tutor. Interview programme commenced.

Mid December
Transcription of Semi Structured interviews underway. Amend and finalise the Literature Review. Chase questionnaire non returns

End December
Completion of methodology section and submission to tutor.

Early January
Interview programme continues. Analysis of questionnaires. Transcription of interviews also continues. Literature review completed and handed to tutor.

End January
Case Study selections made. Pupil and parent questionnaire and interview programme commences.

February
Chase up pupil parent questionnaires, and complete all interview transcriptions. Analyse all questionnaire results and decide on clearest method of presentation (Graphs, tables etc.) Maintain a diary of how the data research progresses in readiness for the methodology evaluation.

March
Write up the results section and submit to tutor
Early April  Time available in case the above process overruns. Completion of the Methodology evaluation, and submission to tutor.

Mid April  Recommendations and conclusions section to be completed and submitted.

May  Final opportunity to amend any sections completed thus far, in the light of discussions with tutor. Completion of abstract, Appendices, contents, figures and tables etc.

Late May  Final Proof readings. Presentation and binding ready for final submission.

Resources

♦ Access to pupils, teachers, parents, colleagues.

♦ Audio / recording and transcription equipment for the interview process.

♦ PC computer for word processing facilities, together with Word and SPSS programmes.

♦ Access to the Internet and Education databases such as ERIC

♦ Access to Libraries

♦ Published texts and journals.

♦ Able child organisations such as NACE and NAGC.

♦ Research instruments including questionnaires and semi structured interview schedules.
Part Two

The Review of Literature
2. The Review of Literature

All children, deserve the chance to lead a happy, satisfying and fulfilled life. Gifted children have a great thirst for knowledge, and it is vital that this need is recognised as early as possible so that parents and teachers can give them plenty of opportunities to develop their talents.

(Help With Bright Children, NAGC, 1998. p 4)

The issue of educating able and talented / gifted children has interested researchers for many decades. During this time, a wealth of material focusing on effective identification and provision has been published. However, little agreement exists among researchers about how to realise the needs of these children. Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI, 1992) review, The Education of Very Able Children in Maintained Schools, states, '...there is no generally accepted definition of what constitutes an able child', (in Teare 1996, p. 2). Likewise, conflicting research opinions exist regarding what terminology can be applied to this sector of the school populace: able; talented; gifted; exceptional?

This Literature Review, in response to the research aims expressed in Section One, regarding identification, provision and policy making for able and talented children, will focus on, and debate the following issues: definition; legislative support; why provide?; identification methods; curriculum provision; learning styles; role of teachers and parents; and policy provision.

1. Definition

Clark, [1983] researched definitions of able children over the past 50 years. He identified a significant change in emphasis away from the work of Terman (1925) and
Figler & Bish (1959), who, using instruments such as the *Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale*, define giftedness solely in relation to superior intellectual prowess. Both he and Kristen et al (2000), cite the work of Marland (1972), who developed the 'Six Domains of Excellence' theory of De Hann & Havighurst (1993), to define gifted and talented children as, '...capable of high performance...and or potential ability in any one of the following areas, both singly or in combination: general intellectual ability; specific academic aptitude; creative or productive thinking; leadership ability; ability in visual or performing arts; Psychomotor ability.' (Kristen et al. 2000, p.220). This notion of giftedness was further developed in the *Three Ring Definition of Giftedness* presented by Renzulli in 1978, where, giftedness is based on the interaction and development of three clusters of human traits: above average ability; high level task commitment; and high levels of creativity. Increasingly, the work of subsequent researchers such as Tannenbaum(1983), Gagne (1985) and Young & Tyre (1992, p.5) refer to giftedness in much broader terms: both in personal terms, 'There is no such animal as the gifted child, but there are children who have different propensities and potentials from their peers, because each child is unique'; as well as in relation to society as a whole. Maitra (2000, p.297). explains that, 'In India...tribal people give maximum importance to leadership traits...In urban culture, maximum importance [is given] to academic giftedness'.

The absence of a single definitive statement outlining giftedness or ability, therefore presents us with a wealth of skills and talents to consider and cater for. However, Essen and Welch's 1989 Survey does not regard this vagueness of approach as a constraint, but rather as, ' liberating... presenting as it does the challenge of recognition of exceptional behaviour in whatever guise it may appear.' (p. 2).
2. Legislative Support

In view of the tremendous research interest relating to able and talented children, it is surprising to note the almost total, '...neglect of very able pupils within the state sector by successive governments.' (Bonshek & Walters, 1998, p.23). The introduction of comprehensive education in Circular 10/65, and the subsequent failure of the 1976, and 1980 Education Acts, as well as the 1978 Warnock Report, to recognise the special needs of able and talented children, sparked claims from parents and researchers that the aims of the 1944 Education Act (Butler Act), entitling all children to 'an education appropriate to their age, ability and aptitude.....(including) children with a high level of general or specific ability ' (Clark, 1983, p.5), were simply not being realised. Indeed, the continued omission of able and talented provision in the 1988 (Education Reform Act), as well as the 1993 and 1996 Education Acts, have done little to alleviate concerns regarding the removal of education opportunities for the academically elite. Koshy & Casey (1999) suggest that it was HMI (1992), who were among the first to recognise that, '..able pupils in our schools are not sufficiently challenged'. (p.3). Despite government calls for the introduction of differentiated curricula for able children in the 1993 Governors' Guide to the Law, and for the publication of provision details for able children in school prospectuses ( DfEE, 1994); it was not until 1998 that the establishment of a government advisory group specifically to investigate and represent the needs of able and talented children was announced by Schools Standards Minister Estelle Morris, in the Excellence in Schools White Paper. Like many researchers before her, Spencer (1998, p.1) acknowledged, '...the attitude that gifted children can cope by themselves has let down too many people'. The resulting House of Commons Select Committee (HCSC) published their report in 1999. It called for all LEAs to develop an able child
policy. It stressed the need for greater initial teacher training (ITT) and in-service (INSET) provision and more effective learning and teaching strategies that include enrichment and extension activities to recognise the special educational needs of able and talented children. The report also welcomed the government's *Excellence in Cities* Initiative, a three year programme which has established nearly 500 Summer schools for able and talented students, to, '.. push them as far as possible and to teach them that learning can be fun...[without] fear of being teased by other pupils'. (Kelly, 2000 p.1)


This debate centres around a number of fundamental issues. First, the HCSC (1999) recognised in their report the benefits that effective able child provision could have for the whole school. This belief is strongly supported by many current researchers, including Murray (1997), Kirby (1996) and Tassel-Baska & Kublius (1989, p.171), who advocate, 'The best education for the best, is the best education for all.'

Secondly, Boyer (1983), asserts that too often the needs of able and talented children are overlooked, because, '. teachers and administrators assume they'll make it...[he asserts the need for] flexibility...and a move to new areas of learning', (p. 236). Kirby (1996, p.2) agrees, suggesting that, 'All pupils are individuals with their own special needs and requirements. Talent can be wasted without the appropriate knowledge and skills to direct it'. He calls for an appropriate range of learning approaches, speeds and interests to meet individual needs.
Thirdly, Teare (1998) focuses on the issue of underachievement as a major factor in the argument for better able and talented provision. He states, 'All children, including the most able, have a right to a challenging and appropriate education...[there are] too many instances of able and talented children being left unfulfilled, bored, under challenged or frightened to use their abilities for fear of peer pressure.' (p.7) Peer pressure and elitism, are areas of concern also highlighted in the work of Hackett (2000) and Eyre (1997), but too often overlooked when considering the need for provision.

Finally, in relation to justifying the need for specialist provision, lies the debate about how to prepare these children for life in today's rapidly changing society. The Prime Minister, quoted in the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE) document, *All Our Futures: Creativity Culture and Education* (1999), stated the government's aim to create, 'A nation where talents of all the people are used to build a true enterprise economy for the 21st Century, where we compete on brains not brawn' (p.6). We live in what researchers, such as Parker (1997, p.90), describe as a "Post Modern society", where much emphasis is placed on personal responsibility, individuality and reflexive thinking. As part of this trend, Bowring-Carr & West-Burnham (1997) note a discernible shift in focus toward flexible learning organisations and structures, which enable and encourage extended, deep and life long learning to be realised; they argue that such independence is essential if young people are to become, 'emotionally and intellectually equipped to cope with the demands that their lives will make of them' (p.1). NACCCE (1999, p. 13), sums up the issue,
We live in a fast moving world. While employers continue to
demand high academic standards, they also now want more....
people, who can adapt, see connections, innovate, communicate
and work with others.

4. Identification

George (1997), identifies three major categories of identification procedure featured
in research literature:

1. The administration of different types of standardised tests.
2. Teacher appraisal and identification
3. Rating scales and checklists.

Testing - While researchers such as Teare (1998) and Tilsley (1995) advocate the use
of standardised, yet appropriate broad spectrum intelligence tests, such as the Stanford
Binet IQ test, CATS, and School Exams as a major source for gathering information
relating to pupils' intelligence, many other researchers warn of the negative aspects of
such testing procedures including, under performance; distortion of results, margins
for error and misinterpretation. Freeman (1996, p.9) stresses, 'the need for a
longitudinal view,' in order to lessen the effects of these variables mentioned above.

Teacher appraisal - The identification and nomination of pupils based on continuous
assessment of course and homework grades can, in the view of Tilsley (1995),
provide vital evidence to complement and support the data gathered from testing
procedures. Eyre (1997) supports this view. She quotes research evidence that claims
teachers' opinions are accurate in up to 83% of cases. However, as this figure
suggests, mistakes can occur. To illustrate this, Eyre quotes the following teacher
appraisal of Dr David Bellamy from Dickenson's book Could do Better (1982),
'Bellamy is a good fellow, is maturing well, but is academically useless.' (NAGC 1998, p.5).

**Pupil Checklists** - Many researchers, therefore, including Denton & Postlethwaite (1985), Clark (1983) and Welch (1989) offer very similar examples of rating scales and pupil checklists that outline the perceived general characteristics of able and talented children in areas of learning, intellect, concentration, observation, communication and special interests (See Appendix A). Teare (1996), on the other hand, leads the argument in favour of more specific subject based checklist, on the basis that, 'only a small proportion of children are equally able across the curriculum' (p.13). The work of Welding (1998) and Chyriwsky (1996) concurs with this: 'Identification and provision can be planned and even combined most effectively within subjects as the parameters are unambiguous and not dependent on performance in other spheres' (Welding, p.35).

The consensus of research opinion appears to be that each approach holds value, but is not infallible. Leyden (1990) and Teare (1998) lead the calls for a combination of techniques, in order to effect reliability and accuracy of identification.

The checklists of able characteristics, mentioned earlier, highlight an extremely diverse range of talents: artistic, leadership, problem solving and verbal. However, only one issue, that of intelligence, is common to all. But what constitutes intelligence? (Wallace 1983, p. 6) defines intelligence as a '..composite collection of mental abilities which enable a child to learn'. Other researchers, however, including George (1997), present a more 'multi dimensional and holistic' view of intelligence. The *Multiple Intelligence Theory* of Gardiner (1983) has proved very influential in
this area. It presents the notion of seven autonomous intelligences working in unison to increase thought process and learning potential.

Fig 1: Gardiner's - Multiple Intelligences

5. Provision: Where to provide support.

The notion of 'where' centres around the issue of segregation, including in-school withdrawal and public and specialist music/sports schools. Advocates of this approach include Wilson (2000), who argues, 'We cannot do justice to more able children unless we first do justice to the kinds of learning activity in which they engage...[this] inevitably leads to some form of segregation'. (p.11) This is a view supported by Stephens, et al. (1982, p36), who see inclusion, 'as an educational wasteland for our best and brightest'. On the other hand, both Moltzen (1998) and Porter (1999) oppose segregation, arguing in favour of including able and talented children in the mainstream, to avoid giving '...extra status and privilege to [those]
already advantaged...as most gifted children are already in mainstream settings, this is where we must direct our efforts' (p.9)

How to Provide Support

The HMI document (1977), Matters for Discussion, highlights three main areas of school provision: streaming, setting and mixed ability (MA) teaching.

Streaming and setting, it is argued, offer the advantage of pupils being taught with pupils of like ability. However, the following weakness relating to these approaches, as presented by Teare (1998), must be considered. He claims that inconsistent selection and identification procedures undermine 'setting', whereas streaming fails to cater for the fact that children are rarely able across the whole education spectrum.(pp.57-8).

Consequently, research, including the NAGC document Help with Bright Children (1998), outlines the benefits offered by MA teaching. For example, 'Competent mixed ability teaching will challenge a very able child to take responsibility for his / her own learning and create the atmosphere of intellectual freedom that will enable the development of talent and potential' (p. 44). However, the work of both Vernon et al. (1977) and Essen and Welch (1990) balance this argument, by highlighting potential weaknesses in this approach. They state that too often teachers, '...pitch their offerings at the middle range of pupils ...compensatory help is offered to the less able, but not the most able' (Essen & Welch, p.9).

To address this problem, the research work of George (1997), Eyre & Marjoram (1990), Kirby (1998) and Moltzen (1998) all call for the creation of appropriate
learning opportunities for able and talented children by means of a curriculum that encourages differentiation, individual learning and teaching processes, and the development of higher order thinking skills. Three main approaches to realise this goal are presented in research literature: extension, enrichment and differentiation. 

Extension, or the completion of extra work on class based topics, is an approach favoured by many. However, as Wallace (1983, p. 60) so pertinently points out, 'extension programmes must be logical outgrowths, not merely random involvement in whatever happens to be available'.

This is why the notion of enrichment, as a more appropriate vehicle or meeting individual able needs, is gaining increasing favour among researchers. Eyre & Marjoram (1990, p.100) define enrichment as '...a process by which school work becomes alive and exciting and by which learning is an organic, growing, never ending, but ever fascinating journey'. The wider benefits are further outlined by Freeman (1999), who states, 'The wider gains for the child lie in the advantages of improved understanding, encountering and forming new ideas, along with a possibly enhanced self concept.' (p.44). The work of Ivybridge Community College in Devon, is worthy of mention here. As Battersby (1996, p.5) explains, their teaching focus relies heavily on enrichment activities. He quotes the following example, '...each module should create for the student a challenge and make the individual responsible for his/her own learning, to make decisions and resolve a situation'.

Differentiation, on the other hand, as George (1997) explains, is a way of, '...making the whole curriculum accessible to the learning needs of the individual' (p. 105). This is an approach widely advocated in the National Curriculum (NC) 2000, as catering
for individual and or (SEN) provision. It can be argued that this has tremendous, but as yet fulfilled potential, regarding the able or talented child in the classroom.

As with identification, no single approach to able and talented children is either advocated or realistic. Rather the combined approach of MA teaching, supported by a number of appropriate enrichment activities is the favoured option among researchers.


As mentioned previously, education, indeed society as a whole, is experiencing profound changes regarding the way we think and learn. The New Right philosophy of self determination has encouraged the concepts of active, deep, independent and life long learning, thus replacing the 'dependency culture' (Bowring Carr & West Burnham 1997, p 42 ), so prevalent in schools of the recent past. One of the leading advocates of this approach, Tim Brighouse (1999), calls for curriculum extension in the form of "enterprises", that 'involve teams of pupils in ... accelerated learning opportunities in one of the various subject disciplines'. (p.1)

To prepare our able and talented children as active life long learners in today's rapidly changing society, research argues that philosophies relating to learning and teaching should focus on innovative learning and teaching strategies to develop these creative and independent learning skills. To this end, McGilchrist, Myers & Read (1998), stress the importance of pupils as active collaborators in a process they call the 'Learning & Teaching Pact.' (p 37). Cooper and McIntyre (1996, p. 119) offer the theory of an "Intereactive - Reactive" pupil - teacher continuum that encourages the use of a wide variety of teaching strategies, including interaction and independent study and active learning to meet these learning needs, - a development of Renzulli's
Enrichment Triad Model, which advocated study through guided exploration, problem identification and independent research.

The concept of teacher-pupil interaction as a learning strategy for nurturing students is seen as an emerging issue by many researchers. Harris (1999) acknowledges its potential for encouraging negotiation and communication skills, while the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) document, (1999), presents pupil teacher interaction as a way of helping stimulate all pupils' motivation and hence achievement. Cooper & McIntyre (1996), developing an earlier study by McIntyre & Brown (1993), use the term "bi-directionality" (p.116) to explain how independent and interdependent learning and thinking skills can be encouraged through effective interaction between pupil and teacher.

There is little doubt among researchers, such as Phelps et al (2000), that independent thinking is an integral component for an individual to become an active learner. In response to this issue, George (1999) in his INSET resource pack, Planning for and Promoting High Achievers in School, outlines a variety of thinking strategies that encourage the development of independent and higher order thinking skills, including Bloom's Taxonomy, Renzulli's- Enrichment Triad, Megarriety's Creative Learning Contract and De Bono's-Six Thinking Hats.

The issue of Creativity is also important within the individual learning debate. The All Our Futures report (1999) stresses the individuality of the various creative capacities, for example, musician, mathematician, scientist and writer, and rightly argues that the task of education is to help young people discover their own creative strengths,
'...particularly if linked with the development of self directed learning.' (p.90). The report sums up the views of many researchers, including Wallace (1983), George (1997), Clark (1997) and Vernon et al. (1977), who for many years have called for creative education to be seen as an integral component of any initiative seeking to extend the provision offered to able and talented children.

7. The Role of the Teacher

Within the larger debate relating to able and talented children, the level of expertise, knowledge and role of the teacher are often considered to be an essential factor relating to success or failure. The implementation of effective and meaningful initial teacher training (ITT) and continuing professional development (CPD) programmes are therefore seen as crucial in presenting and developing new learning and teaching initiatives. The fact that much research material points to serious inconsistencies in this field does raise cause for concern. Fitzpatrick (2000, p. 39), for example, found current ITT provision to be '...haphazard, (with) little consistency of approach', a situation backed up by the findings of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), which discovered that 'many providers did not see this area as high priority.' (Fitzpatrick, p.39). She calls for, '...an increased need for training in the field of the education of able pupils!'. (p.35).

Kennard (1999) considers the lack of government directives and guidance as a major factor here. He quotes the Department for Education and Employment (DFEE) 4/98 Standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) to support this position. The only guidance relating to able children reads:

'Teachers must: Plan their teaching to achieve progress in pupils' learning through

(v) identifying pupils who are very able

23
Knowing where to get help in order to give positive targeted support

(DfEE 4/98 p.12)

To improve upon this situation, Taylor (1997) calls for a greater metacognitive, flexible approach to ITT programmes, with the main focus being enrichment. The main impetus for teacher development must therefore lie within the domain of CPD. Clark (1999) cites the work of Fullan & Hargreaves (1992), Louden (1991) and Clandinin (1986) to support her view that, '...there can be no education development without teacher development'. (p.22). Clandinin (1986, p.3) continues this debate further. She calls for CPD to focus on the issues of active and independent learning strategies to avoid teachers falling into the trap of being viewed as, 'mere conduits of theoretical and cultural knowledge embodied in various teaching approaches and policies.'

Finally, Baldwin (1998, p.27), stresses the importance of the role of the teacher, in respect of someone who, '...inspires or destroys self confidence, encourages or suppresses interest, develops or neglects abilities'. Her view of the teacher as a communicator, being a 'mentor, parent, sibling or peer', offers some interesting opportunities for development of provision. To address these issues, NAGC (1998) calls for the use of INSET training days as outlets for monitoring, discussion and review, both in-house and with outside specialist help, thus affirming the importance of this area of CPD in the eyes of the staff, senior management and governors alike.
8. Role of the parent

A wide body of research evidence exists supporting the fact that able and talented children do have very specific learning needs, talents and abilities, which need to be nurtured to the full. Research presented in the journals of the National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE), stresses the importance of the role played by parent and family support in this process. Van Rossen and D'Hondt (2000, p. 47) state, 'Good education should foster the talents of the child ... but if the family did not provide the soil for the growing of the talents, then they will develop less strongly than what might be expected from the given talents.' This is a view supported in the work of Young & Tyre, (1992, p.35), who stress that, 'Parents recognise their children's differences and are sensitive to them. Often they see attributes, characteristics and defects others, including professionals, fail to discern.' Gareau, (1994 p. 136), pursues this argument. He believes that the, '... sharing of knowledge of the child's experiences at home and at school would help both the teacher and the parents, in their respective roles as facilitators of their child's education.' Both Porter (1999) and Welch (1989) see wider education and curriculum benefits from this interchange. Welch, in particular, singles out the issue of parent-school interaction during the transition process between schools (particularly primary to secondary), as being of particular value; a time when parents' concerns about their child's welfare and provision are most heightened. The need to understand the quality and extent of able child support being offered by a school, particularly for those pupils with abilities or talents, is of utmost importance to parents. Closer links should be forged to ensure that parents or pupils do not feel let down, and that learning is not the inspiring enjoyable process it should be. Rachael Pearson, talking about her son, Jonathan, in the Times Educational Supplement [TES] (1999), is an example of how a lack of
communication between these two sides can result in inadequate provision and unrealised potential. She states her son, due a lack of provision, became, 'very depressed and stressed, because he was bored and frustrated.' Consequently, she ended up withdrawing him from the school context altogether.

9. Policy Provision

There are many interrelated arguments concerned with identifying and providing adequate provision for able and talented children in our schools. To address these issues fully, a suitable vehicle with which to lead able and talented strategies is seen as an essential component of the provision process. The compilation of an able child policy and or written mission statement that outlines identification, curriculum and monitoring procedures, has therefore come to the forefront of many recent research discussions. In June 1994, for example, the DfEE recommended that all schools publish a provision statement for able children in their school prospectus. Without such policies Teare (1996 p.19) professes there would be, '... little chance of consistency of provision ...members of staff need a policy document they can refer to (and)...a successful policy on able and talented pupils will play a role in extending the good practice to other pupils in the school'. Figure 2 summarises the debate regarding which issues these policies should address and contain. It outlines the work of four researchers: George (1997), Clark (1983), Porter (1999) and Teare (1996),
Fig 2: Able and Talented Policy contents.

**Porter (p.273)**
- Statements of philosophy
- Understanding (theory)
- Levels of current provision
- Partnership
- Evaluation

**Clark (p.39)**
- Strategies for recognition
- Tactics for improvement

**Common Themes**
- Who are the gifted?
- How to identify
- Provision for improvement
- Links, especially with parents
- Evaluation

**George**
- Consistency of terms and definitions
- Senior Management screening methods
- Aims and objectives for provision
- Record keeping and monitoring of staff ownership
- Local expertise
- Differentiation methods.

**Teare**
- Teaching groups
- Curriculum provision
- Assessment
- Pastoral support
- Outside links
- Some form of Inset

For a policy to succeed, the notion of staff ownership is highlighted by Teare (1996b) as an important issue. Teare discusses two approaches relating to policy implementation. First, the "Downwards" model, whereby policies are senior management initiated and disseminated. This is a quick fix, but not an approach that encourages levels of understanding or a sense of ownership. Like George (1997), Teare favours the "Upwards approach", where policy emerges from co-operative discussions in staff teams, to ensure a much greater sense of ownership of ideas, shared experience, understanding and implementation of the policy exists. (p. 5).

Teare (1996b) claims that policies, however, are only the, 'starting point for provision ... the overarching document which, ... ties in with other policies'. (p. 19). To this
end, he strongly advocates the introduction of a shadow code of practice, subject based checklists, NC level descriptors, case study work, and effective assessment and monitoring procedures to support the whole school policy.

This ideal has led many researchers, including Murray (NACE, 1997), Teare (1998, p.17) and George (1997 p.133), to plead the case for the appointment of able and talented co-ordinators to lead and oversee this whole area of provision. Teare (1998, p.51), for example states, 'If we are serious about effective provision at both ends of the spectrum, the role of the able and talented co-ordinator is just as important as that of the SENCO'. However, he strongly advises that these two roles be kept separate on the grounds that the workload of the SENCO is already very burdensome. The following summary of Teare's proposed 21 point checklist (1998, p.51) not only outlines the remit of the able co-ordinator's duties, but also fully reflects the multi-dimensional nature of the role:

- Production and co-ordination of policy making and resource materials.
- Whole school liaison
- Monitoring and evaluating the progress of both teachers and pupils
- Links and reviews with parents
- Gathering, analysing all identification data and test results
- Organisation of specialist activities

(Appendix B contains a copy of the complete list).
Conclusion

In summarising the arguments and discussions presented in this review of literature, it can be seen that the issues concerned are both extensive and wide ranging. Many arguments remain open ended. For example, no single overarching definition of what constitutes ability or an able / talented or gifted child appears possible. The multi-potentiality of the debate calls for broader definitions that encompass the diverse spectrum of abilities, which fall within this category of special educational provision. Evidence exists to support the calls for specialist learning and teaching strategies that encourage these students to display independence of thought and action through independent or collaborative learning and thinking techniques, all guided by an able and talented policy statement.

The literature indicates that teachers should strive to ensure these children realise the limit of the potential. Their education is about much more than just academic success. The ideals of 'holistic' teaching and provision, as outlined by George (1997), calls for able and talented strategies that develop the social and personal qualities of pupils, on an equal par with those relating to academic success. We would all do well to remember the words of Young & Tyre,(1992, p.71)

The essence of the education of gifted children is that they should enjoy what they do, and be motivated by their own achievements while leading full and rewarding lives with peers as well as with those of similar abilities or talents.
Part Three

Methodological Considerations
3. Methodological Considerations

Introduction

The research process comprised three studies, each of which investigated current levels of recognition and support offered to able and talented pupils. The results of these studies are presented and discussed in Part Four of this dissertation and an evaluation of these results forms the basis of recommendations for the development of such provision designed to result in improvement to practice.

Study One - Survey

A research questionnaire from which data relating to the identification, definition and provision for able pupils are gathered.

Study Two - Semi-structured Interviews

A more in-depth investigation of the views of a small sample of respondents, to highlight further the current status of able child provision, in the schools chosen for this research.

Study Three - Case Studies

The opinions of pupils, perceived to be gifted / talented, and their parents was investigated through a semi-structured interview format and class observations to ascertain to what degree they think their educational needs have been addressed.

The emerging data, both quantitative and qualitative, from each of the three research groups (secondary teachers, primary teachers, able children and their parents), is used as evidence to support the arguments relating to defining and improving provision for able and talented pupils.
Theoretical Approaches

The research aims presented the hypothesis that provision for able and talented pupils is still very much in a developmental phase. To investigate this issue, a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methodologies were selected because of their potential to reach as wide a range of respondents as possible in each of the schools chosen for investigation.

The very essence of this research topic is ongoing. Able and talented children will continue to be a significant factor in the population distribution of a school. Therefore, it was essential that the project embraced an approach that encourages a continuous, forward looking, evaluation and monitoring process. Bell (1993) highlights this by referring to the action research approach as outlined by Cohen & Manion (1994), "...the task is not finished when the project ends. The participants continue to review, evaluate and improve practice." (Bell, pp. 6 - 7).

Initially, a quantitative survey gathered data from teacher respondents in five separate schools. The analysis of results and responses obtained in turn identified relevant issues, which were then subjected to more in-depth investigation, using purely qualitative methodological approaches. These qualitative techniques dominated the research process, in order to embrace the situational, often subjective focus of the research aims. Hitchcock and Hughes, (1989) highlight the suitability of this approach, "... (it) enables researchers to learn first about the social world they are investigating by means of involvement and participation in that world" (p.8). Within this qualitative framework, arguments are presented from a Phenomenological perspective, based on the result of direct experience, and interaction with subjects chosen for study. This, however, necessitates that judgements and interpretations of
any results obtained, can only be made in relation to the schools chosen for study, and not generalised in relation to work taking place on a national level.

It is the above theoretical approaches that provide the platform from which the research aims can be fully investigated, analysed and effective outcomes realised.

3.1 Study One - Questionnaire survey

Introduction

The focus here was to collect data, "...with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared." (Cohen & Manion, 1989, p.83).

The use of purposive sampling methods, as outlined in Cohen & Manion, (p.89), enabled the selection of a sample that was:

a) manageable in terms of size and,
b) typical in respect of its comparative/ correlational potential.

Sample

In spite of the enormous potential that exists for a larger nationwide survey, time constraints necessitated that a much smaller, local survey be carried out. Teacher respondents were therefore approached in only four schools:

1. School A - the school whose level of provision is at the centre of this research process.
2. School B - A local comprehensive school, used to assess variance of opinions relating to the definition, identification and provision for able pupils, at secondary level.

3. Schools C & D - Two local feeder primary schools,
   a) to research the above criteria from a primary level perspective, and,
   b) to investigate issues concerned with the continuity of care and provision between Key Stages Two and Three.

Table 1: Sample selection and size.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Type of school</th>
<th>Number of respondents sampled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C</td>
<td>Primary feeder school</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School D</td>
<td>Primary feeder school</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total number of</strong></td>
<td><strong>149</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Teachers sampled</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Collection Instrument**

A questionnaire was compiled to gather data regarding respondents' views on how to define, identify and provide for the able child within the classroom. (All quantitative data resulting from this survey is displayed in tabular, or graphic format as appropriate, in Part 4.)
Design

The questionnaire (Appendix C), was designed with the following criteria in mind:

1. To be compact, easy to answer, yet interesting to complete. To effect this a variety of question types were used, ranging from fixed choice list questions, Likert scale and Semantic differential type questions, (as outlined by Coolican 1999, pp.155 - 159), in order to encourage high response rates.

2. To probe respondents' opinions without asking leading questions.

3. To be thought provoking and encourage critical reflection and self-analysis of each respondent's own teaching views and styles.

The nature of this testing procedure allowed for the collection of a wide variety of independent variable data. Coded responses of the gathered data were subjected to the following tests using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS),

- Mean rankings- to illustrate percentage responses.
- Mann Whitney U test - to compare data from the different respondent categories.
- Chi squares- to look at differences between expected and observed data patterns.
- Spearman's Rank order correlation test to measure the predictability and influence of related values upon each other.

There are, however, a number a problem areas that can arise as a result of using questionnaire surveys. As mentioned previously, care must be taken not to ask leading questions or structure questions in a such a way that might bias respondents' opinions. The problems relating to the accuracy of self-reporting and inherent demand characteristics / honesty of responses must also be considered
Pilot Study

To assess the presentation and content of the questionnaire a pilot study was carried out amongst a chosen sample of eight respondents, selection of which was based on the following criteria:

1. Colleagues from both the primary and secondary sectors.
2. Colleagues, who through conducting research projects of their own, have had first hand experience of compiling questionnaires.

The nature of this questionnaire calls for validity from a number of different perspectives, as outlined by Coolican (1999):

1. **Concurrent Validity** - how relevant are the questions in relation to today's, research perspectives. The use of definitions and strategies taken directly from the work of contemporary researchers such as George, (1998), Porter, (1999), Young and Tyre (1992), and Teare (1998) all provide validity to questions 1, 5 and 7.

2. **Construct / External Validity** - Once again the presentation of other researchers' views on able child definition and provision encourages the respondents to understand and interpret the questions in the same way and adds further validity to these questions.

3. **Ecological Validity** - to secure the validity of this questionnaire within its 'natural environment', it was decided to use schools of comparable ages and school results (measured from school performance tables)

The pilot study proved valid in that all respondents understood the layout of the questions, found them easy to answer, and produced appropriate responses both in relation to tick box and open ended opinion gathering questions.
Standardisation

Standardisation of results was achieved in this part of the research process by means of issue of the same questionnaire to all respondents, who were also asked to complete it confidentially and within a two week set period.

3.2 Studies Two & Three

Introduction

The next stage of the research process required a more in-depth qualitative investigation of issues relating to the quality and range of provision currently offered to able and talented pupils in the chosen sample schools A - E.

The following research instrument was chosen for its suitability to the investigative nature of this section of the dissertation:

3.2.1 The Semi-Structured Interview.

Research Instrument

This technique was selected for its flexibility of style. Its focus on the use of open ended questions allowed areas of interest to be probed in much greater detail than is possible with other approaches, such as questionnaire surveys. As Wragg (1978,p.10) explains, it allows interviewees freedom to, "express themselves at some length, but offers enough shape to prevent endless rambling".

A variety of interview schedules were devised for use with the following groups of respondents:
1. Secondary schools, able child nominee or senior teacher, a secondary SENCO, and a Transition Co-ordinator  
   } Study 2
2. Primary school able child nominees  
3. Parents and pupils  
   } Study 3

Design

Interview schedules were composed with the idea of reflexivity in mind. Probes were only used to jog respondents' memories and thought processes. At all times, the aim was to encourage extended and honest responses of a self critical nature.

(Examples of all interview schedules can be found in Appendices D, E and F.)

Results were transcribed and analysed by means of 'Discourse Analysis' as defined in Coolican, (1999, p. 213), "...the qualitative analysis of interactive speech which assumes people use language to construct the world as they see it and according to context and interests." Emergent themes were then used as evidence to support the reflective evaluation and discussions in parts five and six.

(Copies of interview transcriptions can be found in Appendix G)

Procedure and Reliability

All teacher, pupil and parent interviews were conducted in their respective school environments. Identical questions were presented to respondents from each of the respective categories to provide understanding and reliability of answers. To ensure accuracy of any quotations used in subsequent discussions, all interviews were tape recorded and all transcriptions annotated from the audio cassette.
3.2.2 - Case Study (for use in study three only)

Cohen and Manion, (1994 p. 106) argue that case study is the most effective way of observing the, "....characteristics of a single unit - a child, a class, a school."

It is for this reason that a case study approach was used to observe and question two pupils, who were perceived in study one as being able and talented children by the staff at School A. The research focus centred around their opinions regarding the nature of quality of education they had experienced at school.

Selection of Sample

To select the two case study subjects, all the pupils whose names emerged from the questionnaire survey at School A were asked to complete a short tick box exercise based on Gardiner's Multiple intelligence theory, to ascertain what sort of learner they were, and highlight what talents they thought they possessed. (Appendix H). Two pupils were chosen, who showed different categories of ability, namely; intelligence and creative, in order to encourage a greater depth of responses and data in the interview and observation stages that followed.

Research instruments

To achieve the above, two main research techniques were adopted:

1. Classroom Observation - an approach selected because, " Good observation can lie at the heart of both understanding professional practice and improve its quality'. (Wragg, 1994, p.16) A copy of the observation schedule can be seen in Appendix I.
2 The Semi-Structured interview, with both pupils and parents, to '...provide a three dimensional picture...illustrate relationships, micropolitical issues and patterns of influence in a particular context.' (Bell, 1993, p. 9).

Initial contact with parents took place through the completion of the Jin and Feldhausen (2000, p.232) "Talent Identification Scale' (See Appendix J).

Design

The observation schedule was designed to identify characteristics of able children in the two subjects chosen for the case study. For this, the 'Essex Checklist', as outlined in Wallace (1983, p. 32), was used in combination with other observation criteria adapted from the work of Simon and Boyer (1970), as presented in Waterhouse (1983, p. 153). Here the aim was to analyse the current levels of provision offered to able children in the classroom regarding the use of teaching methods and styles, the nature and styles of work required from the pupils, homework styles and requirements and availability of resource support. Of the seven areas of classroom research identified by Simon and Boyer, the following four have particular relevance to the research focus of this dissertation:

Fig 3 : Areas of Classroom research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The amount of emotional teacher support in the classroom</td>
<td>The intellectual life of the classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychomotor</th>
<th>Activity procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The roles, status and interactions of all the classroom participants</td>
<td>Social structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time Study
Procedure

Non-participant observation was used. Lessons were observed and coded, but no attempts were made to participate in or alter the course of the lessons. Observations were conducted over a three week period by means of pupil trails, encompassing a wide variety of subjects. The case study pupils were not aware that they were the focus of these observations in order to ensure they behaved naturally. Observations were conducted from a corner of the classroom where the subjects could clearly be observed. During each lesson an observation schedule was completed, and the lesson dialogue recorded to ensure accuracy of data reproduction.

Validity and Reliability - Studies Two and Three

Throughout the semi-structured interview process and the case study research, every attempt was made to remove interviewer bias, thus validating the structure and nature of the questions presented. Follow-up probes ensured the questioning process reached the very heart of the able and talented child debate concerning how these children are both identified and catered for. Maitra (2000, p.297) supports this approach, when she defines validity thus, "a tool is valid for identification when it really taps at the source of giftedness and hence identifies gifted children".

Triangulation

Coolican (1999 p.469) refers to such 'Respondent Validation' as, "check[ing] out findings and research those who served as data generators in the first place".

It is for this reason that the process of Methodological Triangulation outlined by Cohen and Manion (1994 p.233) as, "the use of more than one method of data
collection within a single study", was used to validate all spheres of this research process.

Fig 4: Levels of Triangulation

The data collected from each of the research study areas was used to form the basis of evaluative discussions in response to the three main research aims of this study, all of which focus on securing better identification and provision for able and talented pupils.
Part Four

The Evaluation of the Methodology
4. Methodology Evaluation

4.1 The Pilot study

The pilot study went well; six out of eight surveys were returned. The validity and presentation of the questions was confirmed by the respondents, although some respondents felt that numbers rather than letters would be better to categorise the checklist questions. Although this numbering system was already an integral part of the questionnaire coding process, it was decided not to use it on the actual survey document, so as not to highlight any statement as being more important than any of the others. The choice of fellow research students as pilot study respondents proved valuable in a number of ways. Firstly, their knowledge of presenting survey questions and, secondly, their understanding of the importance of such as exercise undoubtedly helped achieve such a good return rate. Questions 1 was the only question that was misinterpreted by one respondent, who chose to place a 1 - 7 ranking on each statement, as opposed to selecting only seven statements and then placing them in rank order of importance. As this was an isolated case, it was decided not to alter the question, as other wordings seemed to confuse the issue further.

Study One - Questionnaire Survey

Table 2: Questionnaire Response rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School and Classification</th>
<th>Issued</th>
<th>Returned</th>
<th>% Return</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A - Comprehensive</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B - Comprehensive</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C - Primary</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School D - Primary</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42%  
65%
The overall response rate was disappointing, however, not atypical when compared with the 40% expected response rate as proffered by Cohen and Manion, (1994, p.98.) However, it was felt that enough data was received upon which to assess both respondents' perceptions of issues and gauge the quality of the current level of provision offered to pupils in the schools chosen for study. Particularly pleasing was the level of detail received from the survey returns. All tick box questions were completed in full and the open ended questions were completed by over 80% of respondents, thus providing many thoughtful and honest comments to substantiate the quantitative data.

4.2 Study Two

The Interview Programme

The use of the semi-structured interview proved very suitable to the needs of this research project. All interviewees responded positively and on times in great detail to the various questions presented to them. The open-ended nature of the questions gave the opportunity for flexibility and breadth in the responses; as a result, prompts were not used excessively. The choice to transcribe not code the responses from the interviews proved to be a valuable resource from which accurate quotations could be referenced in support of the quantitative data. A series of seven interviews conducted with a primary headteacher, a comprehensive assistant headteacher, a SENCO, a transition co-ordinator, a parent and two pupils provided valuable insights from a broad spread of roles and levels of expertise. It would have been preferable to have widened this process to other teaching staff and schools, but, due to the time consuming nature of this process, combined with the restrictions of deadlines and timetable commitments, this was not possible.
4.3 Study three

Case Study

The questionnaire based on Gardiner's Multiple Intelligence theory was the easiest part of this process to administer. All 24 pupils, highlighted as being able or talented by teachers from school A, came along willingly to complete this exercise, and did so efficiently and without problems. The graphed results were very visual and made selection of the two case study candidates much easier. From the wide cross section of results that were gained, two students X & Y were chosen as case study subjects, based on the following evidence.

Student X

A female student described by teachers as a model pupil, lively, enthusiastic, polite and able to get on well with everybody. Her academic reports identify her as conscientious and intelligent gaining A* - B grades. She won the form prize for achievement in 1989 - 99 and has shown particular talent and commitment to the areas of music and sport. She was chosen because her completion of the MI survey showed a sense of all round ability, with particular talent in the domains of musical and social talent.

Fig 5: Student X, Multiple Intelligence results.
Student Y

A male student described by his teachers as pleasant, polite, co-operative, mature and hardworking. His school reports reflect a general ability across the board with all grades lying within the A* - C boundaries. Teachers have noted his particular flare for art and design. This all round ability was also reflected in the MI test that he took; however, it was the extremely high percentage of boxes ticked that made him an interesting candidate for case study selection.

Fig 6: Student Y, Multiple Intelligence Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic</th>
<th>Logical-Mathematical</th>
<th>Visual-Spatial</th>
<th>Bodily-Kinaesthetic</th>
<th>Musical</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Intuitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Classroom observation

This was a worthwhile exercise on the grounds that it provided valuable insight into:

a) How the case study pupils reacted and behaved in class in response to a variety of subject areas.

b) What learning and teaching styles were provided for them by school A at the present time.

c) It also provided a valuable tool for cross-referencing the results gained in the survey regarding teachers’ perceptions about the quality and variety of learning and teaching experiences they provide.
The observation schedule itself worked well. It proved easy to collect data on the levels of pupil-teacher interaction, pupil participation, use of teaching styles adopted, questioning techniques and the nature of work assignments set. A lot of information was gained from this process; however, as with the interview process, so much more could have been achieved were it not for the restrictions placed upon this study by time deadlines, a full teaching commitment and the timetable restrictions of the two pupils chosen for study. There is much to be gained here from a broader and more in-depth study encompassing all year groups and subject areas.

**Parent Questionnaire and Interview Process**

Both family groups were fully supportive of the talent identification questionnaire. They showed good knowledge of their child's talents in the tick box section. However, it was hoped more detail would have emerged from the open ended questions in the second part of the questionnaire, which could then have been followed up during the interview process. The parent interviews were the most difficult aspect of the whole methodology to complete. Although all parties were keen to participate here, it was disappointing only to be able to interview one set of parents, due to the problems of work commitments and the limited time in which to complete the process.

**Triangulation and Reliability.**

This was a very complex methodology to complete, due to the sheer variety and nature of the instruments that were chosen to collect data. It took far longer to complete than initially expected. However, it was a worthwhile endeavour, in that the cross-referencing of evidence from each area of study served to validate the results gained. Furthermore, the comparison of this primary data with secondary data in the
form of school policy and record documents, resulted in another level of triangulation upon which to cross-reference results.

Fig 7: Triangulation of Primary and Secondary data.
Part Five

The Reporting of the Results
5. The Reporting of the Results

Qualitative and quantitative data obtained from the three research studies, survey, semi-structured interview and case study observation, form the basis of discussions relating to Aim one; (the identification of able and talented pupils), and Aim Two (the provision and support currently provided at school A). Using these results as a benchmark, recommendations for improvement to practice are then presented in response to Aim three: Policy making.

Statistical analysis of the results in the form of frequency, Pearson Chi square, cross tabulation and Kruskal-Wallace non-parametric tests, were computed using SPSS v.8.

Aim One: Identification

The intended focus here is to evaluate the level of awareness and consistency of approach at School A relating to able and talented children. Aim one presented the hypothesis that these issues are still very much in a developmental phase. Furthermore, the review of literature raised the following issues:

- No standard definition exists regarding, 'what is an able child?' Neither is there common agreement as to how we should refer to these children.
- For many years able and talented children have been viewed purely in terms of intelligence. However, recent research opinion has widened to include other areas of talent and ability, thus adopting a more holistic viewpoint of ability.
- Principal methods of identifying these pupils include teacher nomination, subject checklists and testing procedures.
5.1 Aim One - the Results

In response to the above issues, the results of the questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews reveal:

5.1.1 The Use of Terminology

The debate surrounding how to define and categorise the more able pupil in schools was highlighted in the literature review as being emotive, yet inconclusive. It is an issue that also remains unresolved in the four schools chosen for study. Both the survey (question 4 'How would you define what you personally consider to be an able or talented pupil?') and comments received during interviews reveal a wide spectrum of views regarding labelling of these pupils; 'able', 'talented', 'bright', 'exceptional', 'all rounder' and 'above average' were terms that occurred frequently at both primary and secondary level. Disagreement also existed over the meaning and application of the term 'able' in particular. This dichotomy of views/ perceptions is clearly expressed by the conflicting comments received from a comprehensive assistant headteacher and a primary headteacher during interview, The Primary headteacher's view was that, 'Able covers a huge spectrum of children. I prefer to use the word 'gifted'. In terms of able, we'd be looking for children within the top 20% of the population. Talented or gifted pupils, we'd be looking at the top one or two percent'. However, the comprehensive Assistant headteacher's view was that,' I would personally look at the top 10%.'
5.1.2 Definition.

Arguments emerging from the literature review suggest that a single overarching statement concerning able and talented pupils is not possible, but rather schools should look at this issue in relation to their own specific contexts through the development of policy statements on this issue.

In response to question 2a of the survey, 'Does your school have an able / talented policy statement', these results were obtained:

Fig 8: Data outlining respondents' knowledge of the existence of whole school policy statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- A large number, 48% of all respondents, were unsure whether a policy statement relating to able and talented pupils existed. A further 27% were convinced that their school did not have an able child policy, and the smallest cohort, 25% of respondents, believed that any policy statement existed.

- A cross-tabulation of questions 9a, ('Do you teach in a Comprehensive or Primary school?) to 2a (Does your school currently have a policy statement on able and talented children?), further reinforced the levels of uncertainty regarding policy awareness.
Table 3: Cross-tabulation of results illustrating school policy awareness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Pr</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pr</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C</th>
<th>Pr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C = Comprehensive  Pr = Primary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pearson chi square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.692 a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data suggest that primary schools appear to be much more aware than comprehensives about the existence or not of any policy material on this issue. Only one primary respondent out of 11 did not know whether a policy existed, compared with 31 out of 67 secondary teachers; a much higher response than would reasonably be expected by chance, thus implying that levels of communication and dissemination of information are not as effective in larger school environments. The significance of these results is further supported by the Pearson chi-square test score of 0.001.

• With specific reference to policy awareness at school A, the following results were received:

Fig 9: Respondents' awareness of able child policy existence at school A.
It can be seen here that a substantial proportion, 25 / 38 or 66% of the respondents, are unclear as to the existence of policy material. Furthermore, only 5/38, i.e. 13%, knew that the overall ethos of the school SEN policy does recognise the educational needs of pupils of all abilities. It states

'School A] offers a range of provision for pupils with special educational needs that is appropriate to their development...[School A] recognises that all pupils may at some time have special educational needs.

* Interviews conducted with teachers at this school, including the SENCO and an assistant headteacher, unanimously confirmed that at present no policy statement does exist at the school specifically for able and talented children. The SENCO stated, 'We really haven't got a lot of formal policy. It's not on the CoP for SEN, it would be addressed in a main school setting', This view was confirmed by an assistant headteacher,

There isn't in my knowledge one that is written down... or if there is, I haven't seen it. I think you'll find... the work is taking place, but if you asked them what is the policy relating to able and talented children, then, I think you'll find you get a different answer. I think it is done generally, which is probably the best way, not because a policy exists, but because it is good for the kids.

These results take on an extra significance in relation to evidence presented in the literature review, which referred to calls made by the DfEE in 1994 for all schools to publish levels of provision for able pupils in their school prospectuses. Upon examination, the current prospectus for school A does not contain any specific reference to able or talented pupils.
When looked at from a departmental perspective in Q3a, 'Does your department have a policy relating to able and talented pupils?' these results were slightly more encouraging.

Fig 10: Data table and graph reflecting respondents' awareness of departmental policy statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>Pr</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>Pr</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>Pr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson chi square | df | Level of Significance
4.568a | 2 | 0.102

This graph shows that far more respondents (37%), were aware of individual department's policy developments for able and talented pupils, this is a trend acknowledged, during interview by the Transition co-ordinator at School A. Referring to a school based INSET course a few years ago, she states,

Perhaps individuals may have taken them (his ideas) on board...but I don't think they've been taken on board as a school issue anyway.
Discussion

These results here reveal that there is a level of awareness regarding able and talented pupils across the whole spectrum of schools chosen for study. Many respondents hold very clear, yet individual views on what they consider to be able or talented pupils, and what are the most suitable labels for them: able, gifted or exceptional. The results confirm the evidence presented in the literature review, which suggests that a common definition of what constitutes an able child is neither possible or desirable. Rather, policy statements should be drawn up in relation to individual schools, their specific needs and contexts.

In relation to the four schools chosen for study, such diversity of opinion is perhaps not surprising when it is considered that, at present, neither school possesses a policy statement regarding able and talented children. It is, therefore, reasonable to say that this is an area, which presently lacks a sense of focus and leadership.

Particular areas of concern arising from these results:

a) All schools are currently failing to meet the DfEE's 1994 directive relating to published policy statements.

b) The large number of respondents unsure as to whether an able policy existed at their school reveals a lack of communication and or dissemination of information throughout the school structure, thus outlining this issue as being in obvious need of development.

5.1.3 Identification

Having presented results outlining the conflicting views of respondents regarding how to define able or talented children, the issue of how these children are to be identified
becomes central. Question one used checklists presented by researchers such as Denton & Postlethwaite (1985) and Parker (1989), and asked respondents to select and place in rank order of importance (1 >7) the seven characteristics they most closely associated with able and talented pupils. As highlighted in the literature review, much research material over the years has stressed ability purely in terms of academic ability or intelligence. This, together with the lack of policy direction and guidance at school A, raises an interesting post hoc experimental hypothesis, in that it may be reasonable to assume that most teachers still view, and will highlight, potentially able and talented pupils in terms of pure academic excellence. The following table outlines the responses received.

Table 4: Respondents’ rank order responses to able pupil criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank order of priority</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Not selected</th>
<th>Total score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Committed to work</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Mathematical skills</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Is creative</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. High intelligence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Good language skills</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Sporting excellence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Communicate well</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Leadership qualities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Independent worker</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Artistic excellence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Displays mechanical ingenuity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Numbers here reflect how many respondents selected each option]

When placed as a graph, these results clearly support the hypothesis, in that 41 respondents, some 61% of the sample, placed intelligence as their first choice in the
Only 7 respondents out of 68 (10%) did not include intelligence as one of their selections.

Fig 11: Respondents' rank order results, presented as a bar graph.

- Other areas that scored well can also be seen to lie within more academic skill areas e.g. Committed to work (49%), Good language skills (54%), Communicates well (53%), Independent worker (54%), and Creative (55%).
- It is also interesting to note the areas which received the least recognition were Sporting Excellence (21%), Leadership qualities (26%), Artistic excellence (30%) and Mechanical ingenuity (27%): all areas which feature the more personal, individual areas of talent and prowess.

Question 5, 'which of the following learning/ personality characteristics, attract your attention?', also looked into the question of pupil identification, but this time from the perspective of which individual characteristics most attract a teacher's attention, as opposed to the broader academic statements investigated in question 1. The results
obtained in response to the following statements taken from the review of literature, (Clarke, 1982), were as follows:

Table 5: Respondents' acknowledgement of individual learning and personality characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N = 67</th>
<th>Selected</th>
<th>Not selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Curious, highly motivated</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Able to work individually</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Always achieves high marks</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Is very verbal</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Is impatient, bored</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Has low tolerance for slower students</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Has advanced questioning skills</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) Is silent and withdrawn</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) Acts differently from peers</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j) Tends to underachieve</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k) Has keen observation powers</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results here reveal a clear divide of opinion. Few mid-range results are evident, the scores being either very high or very low. As in question 1 a trend toward placing particular emphasis on the 'academic' skills is evident in options a, b, g and k.

As a result many characteristic features relating to the social skills and behaviour patterns of able children, such as e, h, i, and j, are being overlooked at the moment.

The semi-structured interview programme also addressed the issue of identification of these pupils, by focusing in more depth on the methods and structures that exist within school A to select able and talented individuals. The following statements were received from the assistant headteacher, 'There is a lot of information that comes from the individual departments to the year tutors and to the Curriculum Committee…but a lot of the structure is informal'. The SENCO commented, 'There are collective year lists outlining SATs results, reading tests, this data base could be used for highlighting
the more able students'. The transition co-ordinator reported, 'The year tutor would have the oversight of the whole year group and after reports they compile data so they know how many pupils have had good results...but nobody does it formally...throughout the school.'

Currently at school A the following documents are used for the compilation of statistics:

- Year 7 database
- Targeting sheet
- Year tutor report analysis sheets
- Primary transfer sheet
- Test results page/Cognitive abilities information

(Examples of these pages can be found in Appendix K)

This lack of 'formal provision' was also highlighted by the other teachers questioned during the interview process. There was unanimous agreement that, '...there are procedures in place, but not necessarily overseen by one person'. It was also confirmed that at present there is no 'able child co-ordinator' at school A to oversee and formalise the provision offered to pupils. The question was raised in the literature review about whether or not this falls within the remit of the role of SENCO. In response to this, the SENCO at school A firmly believed, '...it could be the SENCO...but the CoP is a demanding document to fulfil, and really in many schools it is another person who is placed in that role.'

Discussion

Both the quantitative data and qualitative statements combine here clearly to support the hypothesis that intelligence and areas of academic prowess are still considered as
the most important criteria for identification of able students. At the moment, all data relating to able and talented pupils is based on test results and predictions; there is no standardised system for teacher nomination of pupils, relating both to test data and other areas of exceptional talent.

A second theme emerging from these results highlights the lack of agreement at School A concerning the methods and process for the identification of able and talented students - what information is collected, how, where does it go and what is subsequently done with it? The question arises, 'Is the best use being made of current pupil information?' These results would suggest not, and once again the need for better dissemination of such information is required, so policy and practice can be understood and applied consistently by all staff.

The 'informality' of this aspect of provision does not seem to be working to its full potential. The need, therefore, arises for an identification system which, although being easy to understand, implement and operate, can effectively collect, pass on and return information to all levels of the school structure. This needs to be organised from a central source and spearheaded by a teacher with specific responsibility for able and talented children, if any degree of consistency of approach and standards is to be achieved. This is a view echoed by both the transition co-ordinator, who believes that, 'A lot of information is here in school, but it needs someone to oversee it', and the SENCO who, because of the demands of the CoP, favours working alongside someone who would then receive, 'support from the systems that operate the provision for SEN.'
Aim Two - Provision

The research focus here lies in the investigation and comparison of current school practices and levels of provision designed to support and develop the needs of able and talented pupils.

The following areas of discussion emerged from the review of literature.

- The debate surrounding the issue of why provide such support.
- The arguments concerning the inclusion or segregation of able and talented pupils.
- The issue surrounding streaming, stetting or mixed ability teaching as the most appropriate educational grouping for the tuition of able and talented pupils.
- The emerging importance of active learning styles, including the use of enrichment and differentiation, as important stimuli to enhance the learning needs of able and talented pupils.
- The role of teachers and parents in the learning support process.

5.2 The Results

5.2.1 The need for provision.

Respondents' views on the need to provide specialist provision for able and talented pupils was sought by means of a six point Likert type scale, where opinion was rated ranging from 1- strongly agree to 6 - strongly disagree.
Fig 12: Data table and graph outlining respondents' views relating to the need for provision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the data table and graph show, over 81% of respondents agreed that provision of this kind was warranted in schools. A Kruskal Wallis non-parametric test was used to compare responses between the secondary schools.

Table 6: Non parametric test results comparing responses relating to the need for able child provision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chi square to consider the difference in opinion relating to the need for provision between primary and secondary sectors.</th>
<th>Pearson chi sq.</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.649</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.421</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Pearson chi square result of 0.649 showed no significant difference of opinion between the two categories of school investigated, thus establishing a support base for the introduction of policy specifically directed at the needs of able and talented pupils.
These figures are consolidated by the many positive statements that emerged from question 6b of the survey. 'Can you explain your views for or against providing specialist provision for able and talented pupils?' The following quotations summarise the opinions expressed by respondents, as to why specialist able and talented provision is needed:

To ensure that they develop in all subject areas, they must be given opportunities to test and extend their understanding, otherwise they will become bored and switched off to that subject.

Pupils who are able and talented are part of the SEN spectrum - in that there should be provision appropriate to their need.

For an able / talented pupil to thrive, provision must be made to meet their needs.

Any talents should be nurtured and stretched to enable pupils to achieve their full potential.

Despite overwhelming support for this ideal, some respondents also expressed concern that the needs of these pupils must not be developed at the expense of others.

The views of two respondents have particular relevance here:

a) 'Pupils should be helped, but not to the extent of belittling other pupils, but definitely to avoid pupils becoming bored'

b) 'Pupils with high ability (SEN) should be encouraged to achieve their full potential, as long as it is not to the detriment of all other pupils'.
In this they highlight the arguments presented in the literature review, which warn of this danger, but also present the argument that such provision can also be of benefit to the learning needs of all pupils in a school.

Only a few respondents opposed offering special help to able and talented students. Their arguments stemmed from their belief that, 'Professionals ought to be competent enough to meet such abilities / needs', 'Education is for all, not just special individuals', and, 'Cream always floats to the top!' Of the 67 respondents, 13 or 19% remain unsure as to the need for this area of provision. The principal reason given for this uncertainty was, '...lack of information to make an assessment'. The absence of specific 'able and talented' policy documentation on this issue, as mentioned earlier, must be considered a contributory factor for this uncertainty.

**Discussion**

There is clearly a strong support base for introducing provision that addresses the needs of able and talented pupils without setting them apart from their peers. Any system that is introduced must, therefore, consider the needs of these pupils academically and socially and from an individual perspective. It is crucial to the success of any new system of provision that the process is understood, discussed and supported by all. In this way, everyone has a sense of ownership, understanding and pride in the process, thus affecting consistency of approach across the curriculum.
5.2.2 Segregation and Inclusion

Having established the consensus of opinion in favour of offering specialist provision, the next issue to be considered relates to the nature of such a process. The arguments presented in the literature review relating to the most suitable learning environments for able and talented pupils centre around two schools of thought: withdrawal or inclusion. The following table represents respondents' views regarding both aspects of teaching provision in relation to the needs of able and talented pupils.

Table 7: Respondents' opinions relating to different aspects of learning and teaching provision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of provision</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7a Setting</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b Streaming</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7c Mixed ability</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7d 1-1 Interaction</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7e Enrichment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7f Acceleration</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7g Differentiation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7h Individual research</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7i Segregation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7j Individual pupil observation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7k Higher order thinking skills</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7l Self evaluation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7m Critical analysis</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7n Special interest clubs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Withdrawal

The results presented above reflect respondents' views regarding the different approaches to provision as presented in the literature review. Regarding withdrawal of pupils from their normal teaching groups, the two most favoured approaches are segregation and acceleration. The following graph reflects the views of respondents on both these issues. It is easy to see the large number of teachers who do not favour the issue of segregation.

Fig 13: Levels of support for segregation and acceleration as obtained from the sample respondents.

Table 8: Data table outlining respondents' Views on Segregation and Acceleration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Segregation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceleration</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pearson chi sq.</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Segregation</td>
<td>37.438a</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceleration</td>
<td>11.561a</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.482</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Segregation**

- Nearly 80% of respondents did not favour or use this approach in their schools, and only 14 out of 67, i.e. 21%, used it sometimes.

- Only one respondent favoured segregation on the grounds that it encouraged, 'keen competition between most able pupils'.

- The majority view of respondents was that, 'the able child will flourish in a 'normal' class if the teacher directs/focuses extension questions and expectations towards them'.

- Many qualitative responses in the survey strongly favoured the inclusive approach, whereby pupils are maintained and nurtured in a mainstream setting, with appropriate levels of work and support. One respondent summed up the views of many, 'This can be done within a classroom, as long as well planned differentiated work is evident. Further extra-curricular activities would also allow for a more specialist provision.'

**Acceleration**

- This approach proved more popular with over 60% of respondents saying they used it to varying degrees.

- 27 respondents (40%) did not favour its use at all.

- Questionnaire views reflected that acceleration is mainly used to, 'fast track to early exam success to extend their range of qualifications'.

**Discussion**

The Pearson level of significance scores of 0.134 and 0.482, as outlined in the previous table, reveal no significant difference of opinion between the individual
schools on both these issues. The lack of significance does add weight to the argument that the approaches of acceleration, and in particular segregation, are not favoured by the majority of teachers and schools, who prefer able and talented children to stay within the mainstream system. The results fully reflect the views expressed in the literature review in favour of inclusion. Qualitative responses taken from question 6b of the questionnaire survey, (Why do you agree/ disagree with specialist provision?), further substantiate the results gained in response to question 7, ('How often do you use the following learning and teaching strategies to provide for able and talented pupils in your classes?).

'I agree that all pupils should be developed to their full potential, but should still be part of a group / class. (Don't agree with fast tracking)'.

Respondents who are undecided on the other hand, believe much depends on 'the extent of the talent, and whether it can be stimulated / nurtured within existing structures or requires additional support'. The capacity of a school to respond to its own unique micro environment, demography, intake and levels of parental support is also a key factor when deciding the nature and levels of support that can be offered on this issue.

5.2.3 Pupils' teaching groups

Having established the majority view being in favour of mainstream inclusion for able and talented pupils, the issue of how these teaching groups are organised becomes significant.
Table 9: Results from the survey reflecting the popularity of setting, streaming, or mixed ability groupings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streaming</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Ability</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency data presented shows that by far the most popular of the above grouping options, is that of mixed ability teaching, with 43 / 67 [42%] of respondents preferring to use this approach on a permanent or at least frequent basis. This is compared with 17 [22%], in favour of streaming and 38 [36%] in favour of setting.

Fig 14: Respondents’ preferences regarding classroom groupings

A cross-tabulation of frequency data was carried out to investigate significant differences of opinion between respondents in a) the individual schools surveyed and b) between the primary and secondary sectors. The following results were obtained:
Table 10: Cross-tabulation of results from schools A and B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Count (school A)</th>
<th>Expected count (school A)</th>
<th>Count (school B)</th>
<th>Expected count (school B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Expected count</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Expected count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(school A)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(school B)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streaming (school A)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streaming (school B)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed ability (school A)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed ability (school B)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cross-tabulation of results between four sample schools

Pearson chi square | df | level of significance
---|----|----------------------
31.787a | 12 | 0.001
36.414a | 12 | 0.000
13.938a | 12 | 0.305

It can be seen that a number of areas of significance occur in the responses received from the two secondary school A & B, particularly regarding the issues of streaming and setting. Here, the highlighted boxes illustrate a number of results significantly higher or lower than would be expected by chance. It is interesting to note that the primary school responses showed no areas of significance.

Table 11: Streaming data - examples of significant results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Streaming</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

69
In relation to streaming, the cross-tabulation results revealed a significantly higher than expected response in favour of streaming from school B and lower than expected results from school A.

However, with regard to setting, school B once again showed a significantly higher than expected count and School A lower than expected.

Table 12: Setting data - examples of significant results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A Count</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B Count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results suggest that school B favours the segregation of its pupils more, whereas school A is more committed to mixed ability groupings. The fact that five out of the seven GCSE subjects observed at school A used setting, would suggest that the majority of mixed ability teaching does take place at the Key Stage Three level.

Table 13: Cross-tabulation of secondary versus primary schools' data relating to setting streaming and mixed ability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting (sec)</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected count</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(primary) Count</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected count</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streaming (sec) Count</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected count</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(primary) Count</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected count</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed ability (sec) Count</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected count</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(primary) Count</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected count</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13 (contd)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Pearson chi square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Streaming</td>
<td>4.126a</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Ability</td>
<td>8.013a</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Ability</td>
<td>4.771a</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.312</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although no Pearson significance scores emerged here, the results do show a number of areas of interest:

- Mixed ability teaching was popular in both primary and secondary sectors of provision.
- Streaming is the least favoured option at both primary and secondary level.
- Setting was used on a limited scale by all schools, although both primary schools returned higher than expected responses in this area.

**Discussion**

All these results combine to reflect the view of respondents that mixed ability, just as stated in the literature review, is the favoured teaching provision, both at comprehensive and primary level, as it offers the widest opportunities to meet the needs of all pupils. Setting pupils of like ability is also popular particularly amongst secondary schools, although, as argued in the literature review, the composition of these groups can also be mixed ability. It is interesting to see from the results that the main differences of opinion regarding provision exist between the comprehensive schools A & B. Their increased size and larger teaching populations do provide more opportunities for experimentation with the size and configuration of different teaching groups.
5.2.4 Teaching styles.

One of the most prominent themes emerging from the review of literature focused on the need to extend and interest able and talented pupils through the use of a variety of teaching and learning styles that included enrichment, differentiation, individual research and higher order thinking skills.

When questioned in the survey, respondents produced the following set of data.

Table 14: Respondents' views on different learning and teachings styles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>Not selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrichment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual research</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher order thinking</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results clearly show that all teachers are aware of these teaching approaches and do at some time believe they use them within a classroom setting to extend the pupils. Classroom observation at school A, however, revealed that:

- Teaching styles were mostly dominated by the 'chalk and talk' approach. Only two of the classes observed encouraged pupil discussion of issues and only one lesson made effective use of IT to deliver the lesson.
- The type of work undertaken was dominated by the lecture followed by individual worksheet approach. Only English and History encouraged individual and or group creative writing.
- None of the lessons observed included any form of enrichment or differentiated work; all pupils completed the same worksheets or set tasks. Upon further
questioning, however, some teachers did say that these issues were more developed through the homework tasks given to the pupils, which tended to be open ended research tasks based upon course work.

When questioned during interview, pupils X&Y had very clear ideas about the ways in which they liked to learn and be taught.

- Both pupils X&Y stated that they wanted their lessons to be presented in an 'interesting, excitable way... we need to sit down and feel we have learned something...we do not want lessons that send us to sleep'.
- Both pupils preferred to be lectured at by the teacher, to ensure they 'had all the facts'.
- Both pupils liked the opportunity to discuss issues in group situations when given the opportunity, and would like to see more practical activities in lessons, such as the opportunity to teach your own lessons, as used in History.
- When encouraged, both X&Y also said they did enjoy researching work for themselves, but often needed the encouragement to do so.

**Discussion**

The categories discussed here represent the active and independent learning skills highlighted by current educational research literature as being central to the learning and development needs of able and talented pupils. In view of this it is interesting to note: a) how small a proportion of respondents use these learning and teaching techniques on a regular basis in their lessons, and b) how many respondents did not select these categories. The question arises as to whether they are used at all by these teachers. Classroom observation certainly confirms that not enough use is made of
these active learning styles and approaches, at least in the year 11 classes that were observed. It would be most interesting to have the opportunity to observe widely classes at key stage three in relation to this issue. The lack of significant results from the chi square tests suggests that all respondents in this area of provision hold very similar views. The views expressed by the two case study pupils suggests that a 'dependency culture' still exists at school A, in which the teacher is viewed as the fount of all knowledge. A new learning climate, therefore needs to be established, one in which pupils are encouraged to take more control of their learning, so that they become confident in their ability to research and take a more active role in lessons.

Another of the emerging areas of learning and teaching provision, as discussed in the literature review, relates to the degree of influence that one to one interaction with a teacher can have on developing self-esteem, interest and confidence in the learner. The following table presents the views of respondents regarding the extent to which they use this approach in their lessons.

Table 15: Results reflecting the use of 1 - 1 pupil teacher interaction in the classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>frequently</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Count</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>.6</td>
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<td>2. Count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The chi square test results here reveal significant deviance from the expected school responses. This was confirmed by cross-tabulation comparing the counts from each of the schools. The shaded areas show where results received are much higher than would normally be expected by chance.

Lesson observations support these results, in that in only one lesson observed did a teacher personally interact with and have a one to one discussion with every pupil in the class. In all other lessons interaction took place in the form of a teacher questioning the whole class, and individual pupils having to provide answers. In these instances only some of the pupils received personal contact from the teacher. Pupil X, for example, had contact with the teacher in every lesson observed. Pupil Y on the other hand was not questioned by the teacher in three out of the four lessons observed. Only in one lesson did little or no interaction take place between the teacher and pupils.

When questioned both pupils X & Y held similar views on this issue.

- They both liked and responded well to direct one to one interactions with teachers. They felt it helped them learn much quicker and they could discuss their ideas and concerns privately and not feel embarrassed to show gaps in their areas of knowledge. Pupil X stated, 'I like one to one, because it makes you feel you're there and being noticed...your teacher knows where you're going wrong, so you
learn much quicker'. Pupil Y concurred, 'you can concentrate on things which are relevant to you...you can ask different questions and not be embarrassed'.

- With regard to interaction between pupil and teacher during whole class question and answer sessions, both pupils were unanimous in not preferring this method of contact. Pupil X sums up their feelings well,

'I don't like this, because, if you're asked a question and you don't know, you feel stupid in front of the class.'

Discussion

The levels of pupil-teacher contact and interaction varied widely in the lessons and subjects observed. Most teachers did try to make an attempt to interact with their classes in the form of whole class question and answer sessions. However, as demonstrated through observation of the case study subjects, this approach does not guarantee that one to one contact between a teacher and pupil can take place in each lesson. From the interview process it became evident that pupils do like and welcome one to one, but much preferred such contact to be in the form of personal one to one discussions. Although much harder to administer, because of time constraints in the classroom, this is an area of teaching provision well liked by students, because of its capacity to boost their self confidence, and not put them 'on the spot' in front of their peers. Because of this its use should be openly encouraged.

5.2.5 The Role of Parent / Home Support

The evidence presented in the literature review stressed the importance of the family in supporting the development of able and talented pupils, both socially and academically. The evidence gathered as part of this research report concurs with
these arguments and highlights how knowledgeable parents can be about their child's abilities and talents, thereby offering themselves as a valuable resource, which can be tapped in order to help develop the best possible programme of help and support for their child.

- The Talent Identification questionnaires completed by both sets of parents, showed a very clear understanding of their child's abilities. Both parents X & Y were able to identify specific areas of academic and social/ artistic talents, thus demonstrating the interest and support they show towards their child's development.

- The interview process revealed a number of areas of interest:
  a) There was very little awareness among the parents about the nature and application of specific 'able child' policy and provision.
  b) They recognised the existence of school based outlets for the development of pupils' talents. Pupil X's parents, in particular, saw the potential of these clubs, and appreciated what they had done for their daughter.

  '...she has had opportunities in certain areas, whether it be music, drama, sport. Everything has been done to bring out these talents'.
  c) Both parents and pupils felt it was very important to receive praise from the school. Pupil X's parents drew particular attention to the merit system and letters of commendation that her daughter had received. Both families also welcomed the awards their children had received from the school prize nights.
  d) Both families felt the need to be fully supportive of, and show interest in, their child's development.
e) Apart from discussions in parents' meetings and school reports, no other contact had been made between school and parents regarding their child's abilities.

**Discussion**

From the evidence presented by the parents, it is clear that through various clubs school A is offering provision to develop the abilities and talents of its students. However, as with other areas of provision, there are many areas where this issue could be developed and utilised more effectively. A sense of leadership is needed to,

a) encourage pupils to attend these clubs, b) forge closer links between parents and the school, and c) formalise the establishment of effective individual target setting programmes, to be understood and agreed by both pupils and their parents.

**5.2.6 Areas for Improvement**

Question 8 of the survey, asked teachers to identify areas of provision they considered in need of development/improvement. The following diagram is a summary of views received. It has been structured to highlight both the interdependency of each issue, and the importance of the need for a more formal structure and the clear sense of leadership highlighted by many respondents. For example, 'A lot of information is here in school, but it needs someone to oversee it...understand the stats...get the information to the right people. Perhaps a small working party could be set up, because I don't think enough is done for these pupils at the moment.'
Fig 15: Respondents' Suggestions for areas of improvement to current practice.

- **Communication**
  - The need to establish open and effective lines of communication to and from a central source.

- **Working Party**
  - To discuss, research and define parameters for able child provision.

- **Policy**
  - a) The need to establish a policy, and,
  - b) The need for everyone to be aware of it.

- **Testing**
  - To be able to make far better use of the test results that are available to staff.

- **Identification**
  - The need to identify early, and have set criteria for the identification process.

- **Training**
  - The need to introduce a regular and effective training programme for teachers on this issue.

- **Provision**
  - Issues raised included 1-1 work, mentoring, smaller classes, IEPs, outside help and fast tracking.

- **Praise and Encouragement**
  - Many staff emphasised the importance of this in supporting and developing a child's abilities.

- **Extra Support**
  - In the form of out of school clubs, study groups etc.

- **Enrichment**
  - A programme of differentiation and enrichment practices to be established.
5.2.7 Summary.

What has emerged from these results is a clear need to grasp the support and positive ethos that exists regarding able and talented pupils. At school A, in particular, it is evident that work has already begun on data collection to target able pupils and that clubs exist to extend talents. What is now needed is for this work to be formalised and developed. Much of the data collected at the moment is not disseminated or monitored effectively. A clearly identified structure needs to be adopted in order to guide this area of provision and ensure that all parties, including pupils and parents, are informed and active contributors to this process.

The results presented in response to aims 1 & 2 have clearly established a benchmark regarding the nature and degree of current 'able and talented child' provision at school A. These, together with the suggestions for improvement to practice, will form the basis of this report's recommendations for improvement in response to Aim 3 in Part 6 of this study.
Part Six

Conclusion and Recommendations
6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion.

The results of this study were interesting in many respects. The issues listed below are worthy of particular mention and will now be discussed in respect of what their findings mean in relation to school A, how they relate to the arguments outlined in the literature review, and from this knowledge, what potential emerges for future improvement to practice, in relation to:

- The standardisation of criteria relating to able and talented pupils
- Policy provision and application.
- Learning and teaching strategies.
- Parent and teacher support.

1. Standardisation

The main theme emerging from the results, is the lack of agreement regarding the definition, identification and provision for able and talented pupils. Dichotomy of opinions are evident not only between the four schools chosen for the sample, but also between the individual teachers within those schools. Such indecision is perhaps not surprising when compared with the findings of the review of literature, where similar contradictions of opinion regarding pupil labels and criteria for categorisation as an able pupil are also evident.

The identification of able and talented pupils is an issue central to the whole ethos of this research report. It can be seen from the results obtained that a very high percentage of the respondents still view an able pupil purely in terms of intelligence, followed closely by other areas of academic prowess, with the social and artistic
disciplines receiving the least recognition. In this respect, the results stand in contradiction to current research opinion. Based on Gardiner's multiple intelligence theory (1983) and George's (1997) arguments in favour of a more holistic approach, they proffer a much broader definition of ability, one which encapsulates artistic as well as academic prowess. It is in response to these arguments that the 'term able and talented', is therefore presented for consideration as a defining label because of its potential to include both academically able, as well as artistically and other types of talented pupils within its compass.

The review of literature also highlighted many able pupil checklists through the work of Clarke (1983), Denton and Postlethaiite (1985) and Welch (1989), and testing procedures such as NFER tests and the Stanford-Binet Intelligence test. The results of this research reveal that neither school sampled currently employs any checklists to help identify able or talented pupils. School A, however, already has in place testing procedures based around CATS and NC tests, and that this information together with transition information is gathered onto central lists, and some pupils names are highlighted. However, at the moment this is where the process ends, and any further development depends solely on individual teacher initiative, as no ongoing monitoring procedures exist. Based on these results, the identification and monitoring of able and talented pupils at school A is not being exploited to any great extent. There is a clear gap in provision and there emerges the need to formalise an identification and monitoring procedure whose aims, structure and outcomes are fully communicated to all participants in this process; parents, pupils and teaching staff.

This lack of agreement regarding a standardised label to define pupils, together with the absence of any pupil checklists, does call into question the validity and reliability
of measures used at school A, and indeed other schools, to categorise pupils as able or talented. Unless a formal definition and benchmark criteria for acceptance as an able child is agreed between staff, both within school A and schools in its immediate vicinity, any work undertaken is open to invalidation and no conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the work undertaken.

2. Policy provision and application.

The results obtained from the quantitative survey show that at present, none of the four schools sampled possessed a formal, whole school policy statement relating to able and talented pupils, although some individual department initiatives were in evidence at school A. Here the results once again fail to reflect the arguments presented by current researchers, such as George (1997), Porter (1999) and many others, in favour of developing whole school policy initiatives to meet the needs of the more able and talented pupils. The formulation of such a policy at school A would serve to establish a benchmark upon which individuals could base their judgements, and standardise selection of pupils as able or talented, thus further addressing some of the issues relating to the current validity and reliability of results obtained in this research. Of concern, however, is the large percentage of respondents who were unsure as to what, if any, policy material existed in their respective schools. This reflects both a lack of communication and sense of whole school ownership in able child provision, an ethos highlighted by both George (1997) and Teare (1996b) as being essential to the success of any work undertaken in this field. In response to the above issues, therefore, this report concludes that this whole area of provision needs a sense of direction and vision, if it is to realise successfully the needs of any potential able or talented pupils. This is where the calls led by Teare (1998), in favour of
appointed co-ordinators to oversee policy provision, take on much greater significance.
Of the four schools sampled, not one currently had an able child co-ordinator in situ. This quite clearly leaves a gap in provision, both regarding the formalisation and standardisation of policy, centralisation and analysis of results and communication of information.

3. Learning and Teaching Strategies.
Regarding the nature of provision for able and talented pupils, respondents were in widespread agreement with the philosophies outlined by the NAGC document (1998) et al, which advocate a mixed ability approach, with selective use of setting according to subject requirements. Within this framework, many researchers over the last two decades have also advocated developing higher order thinking skills (Phelps et al, 2000, & George, 1997), and active self directed learning skills (MacGilchrist, Myers & Read, 1998, All our Futures, 1999). Results of observations carried out on a limited scale at school A reveal that a good proportion of teaching is very much aligned to the 'chalk and talk' format with use of worksheets and textbooks. Very little evidence emerged to support respondents' claims that differentiation or enrichment activities, as advocated by Eyre & Marjoram (1990) & George (1997) occurred on a frequent basis; all pupils used the same material.

The issue of one to one interaction in the classroom, as outlined by Cooper & McIntyre (1996) is yet another area of learning provision that is not fully exploited. Results of observations showed that the majority one to one contact took place during teacher / whole class question and answer sessions. Very few examples of direct one to one contact were evident. This is a pity; pupil interviews showed that they do like
this approach a lot because it makes them feel valued and not under so much pressure to get answers right.

The evidence gathered here through class observations and interviews suggests that in order to meet all potential learning needs of able and talented pupils fully, school A does need to develop more active learning resources, and thus move away from the dependency culture that currently persists between pupil and teacher. There emerges a clear need to study the work of other institutions in this field, such as that outlined by Battersby (1996), as taking place at Ivybridge school in Devon.

4. Parent and Teacher Support

The importance of the role of parents and good home support in the development of the able child has been advocated by many researchers over the years, including Young & Tyre (1992), and van Rossen & D'Hondt (2000). Both parents questioned as part of this research process were very supportive of their children and very knowledgeable about their areas of expertise/talent; this support base must be utilised to the full. However, in order for this to happen, this report concludes that better levels of communication must be opened between the school and the parents concerned to share and develop knowledge about their child. An annual review process such as that suggested as part of a shadow Code of Practice by Teare (1996b), must surely be at the forefront of any new research initiatives in this area.

The role of the teacher must also be considered as an essential component in the delivery of effective provision for able and talented pupils. To this end researchers, such as Clark (1999) and Fitzpatrick (2000), stress the importance of the role to be
played by teacher INSET and development. The research has shown that school A has already engaged in whole school inset on this issue and held a parents' meeting. However, this was over three years ago and nothing has developed since. This process needs to be re initialised, and new INSET sessions organised in order to update people's perceptions and understanding of the latest initiatives relating to able and talented child provision. The forging of closer links with National organisations such as NACE and NAGC must be a priority in the development of this areas of provision.

Summary.

The results show that tremendous potential exists at each school for the development and implementation of policy and provision designed to improve the learning experiences of able and talented pupils within its community. There is a definite level of interest and awareness amongst the teaching staff, that needs to be harnessed and developed. The appointment of a co-ordinator to lead this work must be the first priority, together with the development of agreed standards and criteria that will ensure that standardisation exists regarding the selection and identification of pupils as able or talented.

To effect these ideas and to instigate a continuing programme of development, this report recommends that further research projects should be undertaken, in order to build upon and improve the work that has already taken place on this issue.
6.2 **Opportunities for further research**

1. Follow a pupil through years 6 - 11, monitoring progress and provision.

2. Look into the impact of learning resources such as Successmaker, upon identifying and developing academic ability.

3. Research the work of other schools, both locally and nationally, including
   a) Those who have already employed provision structures for able and talented children,
   b) The impact of the new summer schools for high ability students.
   c) The role of specialist school and City Technology colleges.

   How do these, meet the needs of able and talented pupils? Are there any opportunities for links to be opened up with such establishments? Can any other ideologies / provision be adapted to work within different school environments?

4. To investigate the extent to which provision for able and talented pupils can also be used to improve the overall quality learning across the whole school spectrum.

5. To what extent can targeted provision for able and talented pupils be used to address the issue of underachievement, both for able and talented pupils, but also across the wider school context.
6.3 Recommendations for improvement to practice.

Aim 3 of this study: Policy, set as its objective, the formulation of suggestions for the improvement of current practice, together with the presentation of an able and talented policy statement relating to School A. The following suggestions for improvement, based on the results presented in response to aims 1 & 2, are now offered for consideration.

1. The appointment of a co-ordinator, to oversee the provision for able and talented children, is recommended. His/ her role should seek to formalise and centralise the work that is already taking place in the school, by acting as a source for the collection, analysis and dissemination of information relating to pupil identification and progress. The co-ordinator's role should also seek to widen people's perceptions about all domains in which pupils can display talent. This includes social, sporting and creative skills in addition to the academic excellence already recognised by so many respondents.

2. A school working party needs to be established, to work in partnership with the able and talented pupil co-ordinator, to discuss the creation and implementation of policy statements, systems of identification, and establishment of agreed and standardised criteria, upon which the selection of able and talented pupils can be based.

3. Clear lines of communication are needed in order for all policy initiatives, data collection and identification practices to be universally understood and adopted. Communication is essential is all participants in this areas of provision; pupils,
parents, teachers, primary schools and co-ordinators are to feel they have a sense of ownership in this process.

4. To ensure that this new policy initiative has a clear sense of purpose and direction, it is recommended that the following documents be drawn up and implemented at the earliest available opportunity.

- A school policy statement for able and talented children (Please see Appendix L for example of draft policy statement).
- A shadow Code of Practice, should be formed to define areas of talent and potential, establish a register of able and talented children, devise individual educational plans to meet pupils needs, and monitor pupil progress through an annual review process with pupil and parents.
- An identification structure with clearly stated criteria for selection into programme.
- Monitoring and pupil progress record sheets.

5. The adoption of a mentor scheme involving personnel from both within the school, and specialist visitors from agencies or industry outside the school. This can provide the pupils with much needed guidance and a degree of confidence/self esteem, in addition to providing valuable opportunities for them to discuss their academic and or career development with experts.

6. A clear identification structure needs to be established and adopted based around pupils entering year 7. Such a structure will therefore, depend a great deal on
links with primary feeder schools and early testing and nomination procedures adopted in year 7 itself. Identification of pupils for inclusion on the register and monitoring or withdrawal of pupils from the register can, therefore, go with the pupils as they progress through the school. It is recommended that an identification structure should include the following:

Fig 15: Able and Talented Identification Structure.
7. Closer links need to be fostered with those parents who have children identified as able and talented, regarding the initial identification, provision and monitoring, and the role of home support.

8. With regard to teaching styles, there is little doubt that diversity of teaching approaches is an important factor in maintaining pupils' interest in learning. To reflect the current trend towards active, individual learning, it is recommended that a programme of awareness, led by the able child co-ordinator, be instituted to increase the level of practical pupil involvement in lessons. Closer pupil-teacher interaction and a change in perception away from the teacher led approach, would encourage pupils to become more involved in lessons and take more responsibility for their learning experiences.

9. A continuing programme of INSET provision is required, from both a CPD perspective and a need to raise awareness on this issue, by keeping all participants fully up to date with the latest research developments in this field. This programme need not be wholly school based, but rather should include within its provision links with outside specialist agencies, such as NACE and NAGC, and openly welcome the visit of expert speakers in this field.
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Appendices
Appendix A

Examples of Pupil Checklists

a) Clarke - 1983

1. Learns easily.
2. Original, imaginative, creative.
3. Widely informed.
4. Persistent, resourceful, self directed.
5. Common sense
6. Inquisitive, sceptical.
7. Informed in unusual areas.
8. Artistic
10. Musical
11. Independent work, shows initiative.
12. Good judgement, logical.
13. Flexible, open.
15. Shows unusual insights.
16. Has excellent sense of humour.
17. Shows high level of sensitivity, empathy.

b) Denton and Postlethwaite - 1985

Have great intellectual curiosity.
Early needs.
Very observant.
Display originality.
Learn easily and readily.
Have a wide range of interests.
Have a broad attention span.
Are alert and responsive to new ideas.
Can do effective work independently.
Have superior vocabulary for age group.
Memorise quickly.
Are alert and responsive to new ideas.
Have unusual imagination.
Follow complex directions easily.
Are rapid readers.
Have several hobbies.
Frequent use of the library.
Superior in maths and problem solving.
Superior powers of reasoning dealing with abstractions.
Understanding of meanings and of seeing into relationships.

Understanding of meanings and of seeing into relationships.

c) Welch - 1989 [selection from]

Possess extensive general knowledge.
Has exceptional curiosity.
Asks many provocative searching questions.
Quickly makes generalisations.
Listens to only part of the explanation.
Jumps stages in learning.
Leaps from the concrete to the abstract.
Is a keen and alert observer.
Sees great significance in a story or film.
Is persistent in seeking task completion.
Has a keen (unusual) sense of humour.
Appreciates verbal puns, cartoons, jokes.
Prefers to talk rather than write.
Fast mental speed.
Is more usually interested in adult issues such as religion issues etc.
When interested becomes absorbed for long periods.
Often sees unusual rather then conventional relationships.
Easily grasps underlying principles and needs the minimum of explanation.
Has quick mastery and recall of information.
Is concerned to adapt and improve situations, institutions, objects, systems.
Appendix B

21 point Checklist for the role of Able and talented Co-ordinator
Tearc - 1998

1. Advise on revision to the school policy, especially with regard to changes in local and national conditions.
2. Liase with departments on their own policies and procedures, especially subject checklists.
3. Make suggestions as to the In-service needs of departments and individuals and help deliver the resulting Inservice.
4. Promote the use of pupils referral sheets.
5. Gather information relating to identification of able and talented children.
6. Establish the register of able and talented pupils and make regular updates to the register.
7. Communicate with the parents of able and talented pupils at appropriate times.
8. Be available for consultation with parents at parents' evenings.
9. Co-ordinate the drawing up of Individual Education Plans.
10. Carry out reviews on pre-arranged dates.
11. Organise enrichment activities where feasible and assist departments with the administration of their enrichment activities.
12. Promote the use of competitions, clubs and special events in tandem with the appropriate department.
13. Liase with other phases to ensure continuity and good communication.
14. Liase with relevant associations and other external agencies.
15. Keep a check on educational literature to bring items of interest to the attention of other staff.
16. Establish a resource bank of suitable materials.
17. Encourage the writing of enrichment materials to suit the school's needs.
18. Work with the school library and other resource bases within the school.
19. Develop community links to assist effective provision.
20. Manage an enrichment budget line.
21. Monitor and evaluate the work and suggest improvements to the Headteacher.
Appendix C

Questionnaire - Able and Talented Children

1. The following qualities defining able and talented children have been presented by researchers, including George (1998), Young and Tyre (1992), & Porter (1999). Choosing from the list below, place in rank order (using numbers 1 - 7), those qualities which you consider to be most applicable (1) down to least applicable (7), to the definition of an able or talented child.

   - Is committed to work
   - Has mathematical skills
   - Is creative
   - Displays High Intelligence/ Academic ability
   - Has good language skills
   - Displays sporting excellence
   - Communicates well
   - Has leadership qualities
   - Can work independently
   - Has artistic excellence
   - Displays mechanical ingenuity

   (Indicate rank order by placing a box next to each quality)

2. Does your school currently have a policy statement on able and talented children?
   - Yes □
   - No □
   - Don't know □

   If yes, briefly explain its content __________________________________________

3. Does your department have a policy on able and talented children?
   - Yes □
   - No □
   - Don't know □

   If yes, briefly explain its content __________________________________________

4. How would you define what you personally consider to be an able or talented pupil?

   __________________________________________
5. When recognising a pupil in your class as being potentially able or talented, which of the following learning/personality characteristics, attract your attention?

Please tick (✓) the boxes you consider relevant.

- Is curious and highly motivated
- Has advanced questioning skills
- Able to work individually
- Is silent and withdrawn
- Always achieves high marks
- Acts differently from peers
- Is very verbal
- Tends to underachieve
- Is impatient/bored
- Has keen observation powers
- Has low tolerance for slower students

6a. To what extent do you agree that specialist provision should be provided for able and talented pupils?

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6b. Can you briefly explain your choice of answer above?

7. How often do you use the following learning and teaching strategies to provide for the more able and talented pupils in your classes?

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<tr>
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<th>Never</th>
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<th>Frequently</th>
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<tr>
<td>Specialist interest clubs</td>
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</table>
8. In what ways do you consider that your school could improve upon its current provision for able and talented pupils?

9. Do you teach in
   a) A comprehensive school, or, 
   b) A primary school.

School A only

10. Can you identify TWO pupils, currently in years 10 or 11, that you consider to able or talented?
   1. 
   2. 
### Appendix D

#### Semi Structured Interview - Secondary & Primary Schools

1. Tell me about this school's current policy relating to Able and Talented Pupils?

2. Can you outline how the school's, current SEN policy embraces the needs of able and talented pupils?

3. If that is the policy, what are the current levels of provision offered to able and talented pupils at the school?

   - Whole school department based
   - Teaching and Learning styles
   - Enrichment/ differentiation
   - Resources
   - SEN support
   - Pastoral

4. Outline the role of the appointed co-ordinator to oversee the welfare of able and talented pupils at your school?

5. "The SENCO should be the person in charge of able and talented provision within the school". What do you about this statement?

6. What do you personally understand by the terms Able and Talented?

7. Explain the school's current systems for identifying able and talented pupils?

8. In what ways have recent government legislation or initiatives addressed the issue of able and talented children in our schools?
9. What methods for identifying able and talented pupils are currently employed at your school?

10. What links does this school have with primary school/s regarding the issue of identification of able and talented pupils?

11. In what ways do you think that current provision can be developed and improved?

12. What arrangements are there for record keeping of data and identification procedures relating to able and talented pupils?

13. Outline the links that the school has with outside agencies regarding supporting able and talented pupils?

14. To what extent, if at all, has the school forged special links with parents on this issue?

14. Please outline any INSET training that has been received so far on this issue.
Appendix E

Parent - Semi Structured Interview

1. Can you explain to me your understanding of the terms able and talented?

2. How much do you know about the school’s current policy and provision for able and talented pupils?

3. In relation to question 1/ 2/ 3 on the Talent Identification scale that you completed earlier,
   a) you identified your child as being talented in (name area .) Tell me more about what this talent is and how it manifests itself. OR
   b) In relation to question 1/ 2/ 3 on the Talent Identification scale, you failed to recognise any particular talent. Can you explain the reasons for this?

4. In what ways would you consider that the winning of awards / praise been a source of satisfaction to your child?

5. In what ways is your child aware of his / her special talents?

7. Has your child enjoyed their time at school? Can you explain your choice of answer here in more detail?

8. In what ways have you tried to inform the school about the special abilities or talents of your child?

9. Could you please outline the ways in which you would like to see this process being improved?

10. You said that ………….. is you child’s favourite subject. Can you tell me what are the reasons for this?

11. You said that ………….. is you child’s least favourite subject. Can you tell me what are the reasons for this?

12. In what ways does your son / daughter like to learn about things?

13. The issue of parent support for children
   a) Can you explain to me the degree of importance you attach to this
   c) In what ways do you try to support your child’s development?

15. Please outline the importance of extra curricular clubs/ societies to your child?
Appendix F

Semi Structured Interview Schedule- Pupils

1. Do You Like school?
   Why do you like school
   Why do you dislike school

2. Why do you think you come to school?
   What is your role as a pupil, why are you here?

3. What do you think is the role of your teachers?
   What do you want from us as teachers?
   How do you think we should deliver this?

4. What are your favourite lessons, and why?
   What is good about them
   Any bad points

5. What are your least favourite lessons, and why?
   What is so bad about them
   How would you like them to change
   Would you like to learn this subject in a different way, if so how?

6. How do you feel you learn best?
   What is your favourite way of learning, by doing what?
   Do you like to find things out for yourself?
   How do you achieve this?
   How does the school facilitate this?

7. What are you favourite ways of being taught?
   Can you describe some of the different ways you are being taught in class.
   Which do you like the best, the least?
   Would you like to have the opportunity to organise some things for yourself in a
   lesson? What would you do?

8. Do you understand the expectations we have of you?
   How are these standards communicated to you?

9. Do you ever misbehave in class?
   If so, can you explain why?
   Does it have anything to do with what or how you are being taught?

10. What sort of things would you like to learn about in school?
    Do you wish you could study topics in more detail, if so how?
11. Would you like to have more say in what you study and how you study it? Can you explain your ideas?

12. Can you describe your ideal school to me

13. Do you like to be actively involved in the classroom, if so, in what way?

14. Do you respond well to one to one contact with a teacher
Does this happen often enough
Which lessons does this happen most in, least in?
Does this help you to learn?
What benefits do you get from this?
Any negative effects?

15. Homework - how do you like to complete this?
Would you like to be given more freedom of choice as to how to complete homework assignments?

16. Would you describe yourself as:
a) a confident person,
b) a shy person
c) someone lacking in self esteem

- for b & c What does the school do to help you improve? What would you like to see it do?

17. Would you describe yourself as intelligent, a good academic?
On what evidence do you base this opinion of yourself?
How is this information communicated to you?
In what ways has the school encouraged this, or not?

18. Do you feel you have any other talents/ abilities?
What are they?
How do you develop these?
What has the school done to encourage this?

19. What opportunities has the school provided to help you realise these talents/abilities either creative or academic?

20. How would you like to see this improve in the future?
Appendix G - Examples from Interview Transcriptions

Interview with Primary Headteacher.

Q1 Can you outline the schools current policy relating to able and talented children?
Early identification is important and we hope to pick up children with the baseline assessment in Nursery and Reception. Once the children are identified they are included in our ordinary special needs provisions. We don't have a discrete policy especially for gifted pupils.

Q3 How do you try to use different learning and teaching styles for these children within the classroom?
We differentiate work for all our pupils in the classroom, but if we come across a particularly able child... different learning materials would clearly be relevant.

Q4 Can you outline the role of an appointed co-ordinator at your school for able and talented pupils?
We don't have one. Given the size of our school, we are a medium sized primary and we wouldn't have a specialist post available for that, it comes within my remit as SENCO and so I'm responsible for screening pupils.

Q5 What do you personally understand by the terms able and talented?
Able covers a huge spectrum of children, I prefer to use the word 'gifted', which is slightly more helpful. In terms of able we'd be looking for children within the top 20% of population... Talented or gifted pupils, we'd be looking at the top 1 or 2%. With gifted pupils again, we may find that a pupil's got a gift in a particular area, but it isn't a gift across the board.

Q7 What links does this school have with secondary schools regarding the transfer of able and talented pupils and the transfer of information?
We have very strong links with school A, our feeder comp. The links start early in year 6 and have been developed both in terms of the social aspects but also curriculum. In terms of information sharing, we start at a fairly early stage in the summer term where we start to target set pupils for SATs during the May period. The SATs information and standardised test information which in our case is the NFER tests is then passed on to the comprehensive. Should any pupil be identified as gifted then at a very early stage in the summer term, they would be flagged up as an issue, again with the SEN department and we'd expect the comp to make appropriate arrangements.

Q9 What about any specific Inset on this issue?
We've looked at specific materials that are designed to stretch able pupils, and we've discussed very able as opposed to gifted, but no specific Inset, No.

Q10 Have you forged any special parental links relating able child provision?
Yes, the school policy is that there should be no surprises. So, if we find that a child has any specific talents or weaknesses we do communicate that to the parents at the earliest available opportunity... In this school, the biggest group is probably able but complacent children. We mainly focus in terms of literacy and we have preparatory work packs for use during the holiday periods and so making sure they come as close as possible to achieving their full potential.
Interview with Senior Teacher

Q1 Can you outline the school's current policy relating to able and talented children? 
There isn't in my knowledge one that is written down...or if there is I haven't seen it...or can't remember it properly. The policy is basically to stretch all able pupils. We encourage staff & departments to stretch able pupils with extension work.

Q1a How aware do you think the staff are of that policy?
Debatable, very debatable. I think you'll find that if you ask them do they do certain things, you'll find that this work is taking place, but if you asked them what is the policy relating to able and talented children, then I think you'll get a different answer.

Q2 Can you explain how the school's current SEN policy outlines the needs of able and talented pupils?
Should the same or a different person also look at the top 10% then the question is asked is that special needs as well? ... The reason I've come to this conclusion over the years, is the fact that these kids do quite well anyway, but they could do that much better... The vast majority of the able kids that I have come across are still well behaved and do very well, are congratulated and praised, but maybe they could have gone even further.

Q3 Can you tell me about the current levels of provision at the school for able and talented pupils?
The IT as well as the library facilities are available and that's through the day as well as after school...as I said before, I think they are extended by staff, often without thinking.... Probably what needs to be done is for what happens in the classroom to be brought together and that's what we haven't got. Good practice is going on, maybe it could go on even further.

Q4 You mentioned extension, what about teaching and learning styles themselves?
I think every school offers a wide range of teaching and learning styles... kids adapt between individual teaching styles, and because of these differences, it makes it more interesting...so I don't think that there is in my experience any particular style that suits able bodied pupils best.

Q5 Can you outline the role of the able child appointed co-ordinator at the school?
If you want a straightforward answer, No. I can't outline it ...I don't know about the role.

Q6 'The SENCO should be the person in charge of able and talented pupils'. Do you agree?
I come back to hat I said before, when I said SENCOS could be in charge of the whole top and bottom of the SEN spectrum, or they could have the role with another.

Q7 What do you personally understand by the terms able and talented?
I would personally look at the top 10%.

Q8 Can you explain the current systems for identifying able and talented pupils?
a lot of the structure is informal. There is a lot of information that comes from the individual departments and teachers to the year tutors and the curriculum committee. There are able pupils in this school who I've never taught, but I know who they are.

Q11 What arrangements are there for monitoring pupil progress?
All the information is collected on a spread sheet by senior staff. We also have individual and class monitoring forms. They are monitored far better within departments as well now and target setting is much better now than even three years ago.

Q12 Can you outline the ways in which you think current provision could be developed and improved?
Probably by structure. I do think its happening, but it has to be formalised more. I think what you have to be careful about is that you don't lose what you've already got, and everything becomes a paper exercise that is not beneficial to the kids. At the end of the day it has to be beneficial to the children but maybe we need to draw it together - all the information in one central place. There has to be a delicate balance, it mustn't become pure bureaucracy.
Interview with Senco

Q1 Can you outline the current policy relating to able and talented pupils at the school? We really haven't got a lot of formal policy, its not in the Code of Practice (CoP) for special needs, it would be addressed in a main school setting. Area... We have had whole school courses on it and it was suggested that the school place someone in charge of such an area, it was also suggested the provider that it wasn't really the role of SENCO because it's a heavy load implementing the CoP for pupils with special learning needs.

Q4 Do you know of any policies, initiatives relating to learning and teaching styles? Well there are assessment procedures that embrace high fliers within the school. In other words, you would target potential As and you would extend them to get the grades. That would apply in every class.

Q5 Can you outline the role of anyone maybe an appointed co-ordinator or other person who is currently in situ to over see the welfare of able and talented pupils? We haven't got that co-ordinator as of yet.

Q6 "The Senco should be in charge of able and talented children' Do you agree? Well it could be the Senco, as much as anyone else in the school. But the CoP is a demanding document to fulfil and really in many schools, it is another person who is placed in that role.

Q7 What do you personally understand by the terms able and talented? This is where the issue is not straightforward. It is not about, as some might think about being a brilliant mathematician or physicist. It could be in any field whatsoever. We are learning a lot today about the many intelligences... It is a very complicated issue to make sure that everybody develops the potential and especially if there are these gifts that certain people are blessed with. You have to exploit that and sometimes the curriculum exists alongside that talent.

Q9 Can you explain the current identification system? Well, academically able should be identified through assessment procedures, comments of staff, referral systems and links with parents.

Q14 In what ways could the current provision be developed and improved? Well you could target a group of people who you would want to fast track through the system and have appropriate plans to do so and set up appropriate time table arrangements to do so.

Q15 What arrangements are there for record keeping of data and identification procedures relating to able and talented pupils? There are collective year lists that are available containing SATs results, reading tests and this goes through the school. This database could be used for highlighting the more able students.

Q16 So, everything is kept in a central source? In the case of a high flyer, although the information is there and it is waiting for one person to highlight it and correlate.

Q17 Can you outline the links that the school has with outside agencies to support able and talented pupils, including links with parents? Well there is procedure in place for anyone to be able to go in for performing art productions, sporting tours and are fitted in around the curriculum. They will come through as highly able people but from within normal structures. There is also a case for EWO/Ed psych support. Parents are informed in Parents evenings, both positive and negative re the children's needs and wants, as well as asking for the support from parents.

Q18 Can you outline any inset training that has been received on this issue? We had a lecture as part of a 2 day residential course, a very good session on the 'more able child'. Here it was strongly recommended that the school appoint a person, some role in the managing team, to develop and draw together provision for able and talented students.
Interview Transition Co-ordinator

Q1 Can you outline for me what you know about the school's current policy on able and talented children?
I don't know if the school has actually got one. They have run courses, school based courses on the able child, but as far as I am aware, I don't think they’ve actually put anything into practice.

Q3 Can you tell me about the current levels of provision pertaining to able and talented children?
Certainly not enough. I collect a lot of baseline information from feeder schools, so even in year 7 we're able to identify potential high flyers. I then create a list that is handed to all members of staff, of pupils who've gained level 5 or above in SATs, but that is for individual staff, nothing is taken further and done collectively for that group.

Q5 do you know of the existence of a co-ordinator appointed to oversee able and talented children?
No there's not an individual person, but perhaps this should come in the remit of the SENCO because they deal with special education needs.

Q6 How would you personally define the terms able and talented?
I think it is somebody who is bright across the range of subjects. Someone who in the CAT's tests in year 7 would score above average.

Q7 Can you explain the school's current systems for identifying able and talented pupils?
The year tutor would have the oversight of the whole year group, they compile data so they know how many pupils have good results, A's etc., but nobody I think formally does it, collectively throughout the school.

Q8 Can you tell me about any government legislation on this issue?
Not really, all I know is from the school INSET we attended a few years ago. The man there (Dr Davis George) had a lot of good points, but I don't think they've been taken on board, not as a whole school issue anyway.

Q9 Can you tell me about our links with primary schools regarding able pupils?
I've developed good relationships with the schools, they would give verbal information about their opinion as to who is potentially bright.

Q10 Explain more about this NFER testing please?
They are similar to the National Foundation for Education Research CATs tests that take place in year 7 and will give important future indicators as to potential. We've paid a lot of money for these tests but nothing is done with the results. The year tutor and the SENCO look at them. HODs should have this info, but this is where it stops.

Q11. In what ways can the school current provision in this area be improved?
A lot of information is here in school, but it needs someone to oversee it. Someone who can understand all the stats that are churned out, get the information to the right people. Perhaps a small working party could be set up, because I don't think enough is done for these pupils at the moment.

Q12 What links do we have with parents at the moment?
As far as I'm aware, we've only had that one parents meeting with Dr George, who came about three years ago.
Interview with Parent One

Q1 Can You explain your understanding of the terms able and talented?
Able - When you can see a child is capable
Talented - when you're damned good at something in that area and it shows

Q 3 How much do you know about the school's current policy for able and talented pupils?
I feel with my daughter, in certain areas e.g. music, they did try to push her, to take herself that little bit further, with my daughter, everything was done to bring this talent out.

Q 4 You identified our child as being talented musically, how do you feel this talent shows itself?
The way she acts, behaves. We have a lot of musical instruments at home. She is always picking them up and showing interest in different things. She has lately shown a lot of interest in the latest school musical production. I've never seen her so determined.

Q5 In what ways do you consider the winning of awards is a source of satisfaction for your child?
She's had plenty of praise from school and I think this has been a big encouragement for her. Lots of letters of commendation for different things, for helping people, caring, also for taking part in musical events, and also passed exams when she was studying the violin;

Q6 In what ways is your child aware of her talent?
I don't think she is aware as she could be, or maybe it is her choice to do things in her own way and in her own time

Q7 In what ways have you had communications with the school regarding your child's abilities?
I have talked many times to her music teacher about her good voice. I've spoken to most teachers in parents' evenings and at other times when I've been worried about her, e.g. would her job affect her work?

Q 11 How does she like to learn about things?
She likes to go out and see it for herself. On holiday she likes to travel and see the sights.

Q 12 - If given a homework brief, does she meet the set task only or does she go further?
Yeh. Her project on a castle. She likes to put in things that are different and interesting, things that would inspire. She enjoys doing it.

Q 13 How important do you think parent support is.
Very important. From a young age, we have supported her in all forms of sports and music. We've always encouraged and let them try everything once. If they don't like it, so be it. We don't force, yet we've never had to push.

Q In what ways do you believe you have supported your child's development?
Support, encourage, never push or focus on the negative things. T the end of the day, don't expect, always tell them to do their best and never let them feel you expect too much from them.

Q13 What is your opinion of extra curricular clubs?
Very good, they are extremely important, whether they are musical, social or curricular clubs. All kids should take part in them, and yet again it's an example of the teachers showing that they believe in the children.
Pupil Interviews

Q1 Do you like school?
Both pupils X & Y replied - Yes

Q3 Why do you come to school?
X - Children are the future of the world. We want to progress in the world and learn about things.
Y - To get an education

Q4 What do you consider to be the role of teachers?
Y - To teach us, learn us about things we need to know.

Q5 How should we teach you?
X - We want lessons that don't send us to sleep. We need to sit down and feel we have learned something.
Y - In an interesting excitable way.

Q7 Would you like to learn about things in different ways?
X - Pupils could be more involved in lessons, more practical.
Y - probably more sort of practical work, we just seem to sit down and write.

Q8a How do you feel you learn best... do you like to be lectured at or do you like to find things out for yourself?
X - I like to be spoon fed, but I also like to expand on things that interest me. I like being in groups, where I can express opinions.
Y - I don't mind being lectures at, I learn quite well like that, but I also like to go away and do extra research myself.

Q 12. Do you respond well to one to one contact with a teacher?
Y - Yeh, except when I don't know the answer. X - No, cos if you're asked a question and you don't know the answer, you feel stupid in front of the rest of the class.
1 - 1 (direct) X - I like this because it makes you feel you're there and being noticed, if you get something wrong, it doesn't matter.

Both students felt this contact did not happen often enough.

Q13 Do you think this type of contact helps you learn more?
Y - Yes, because you can concentrate on things which are relevant to you and you can ask different questions and not be embarrassed.

Q16 How could we improve what we do?
Y - you could give people more choice about what subjects they study, and choice within subject areas also.

Q17 What are your talents?
X - I'm a good speaker, I can sing and I enjoy sports.
Y - Creative things, I like art and things.

Q20 Describe your ideal school
X - I would stay at home and the teachers would come to me. They would all be famous people. You can relax more at home!
Y - The lessons would be fun. Only subjects you like would be taught there and everybody would want to work, there would be no messing around.
Appendix H

Please tick the box ONLY if you feel the statement applies to you. Don't agonise- do it fast!

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Enjoys Computers</td>
<td>Aware of others intentions</td>
<td>Senses complex music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Orderly</td>
<td>Wants to be different</td>
<td>Mechanically minded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Thinks in pictures</td>
<td>Enjoys counting</td>
<td>Likes co-operating in groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Can feel rhythm</td>
<td>Spells well</td>
<td>Very determined</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Likes to touch</td>
<td>Creates mental images</td>
<td>Likes being precise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mixes well with others</td>
<td>Remembers tunes easily</td>
<td>Good memory for trivia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Self motivated</td>
<td>Good reflexes</td>
<td>Likes drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Likes abstract thinking</td>
<td>Has many friends</td>
<td>Feels emotion in music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Likes to read</td>
<td>Knows own feelings</td>
<td>Good body co-ordination</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Reads maps/ charts well</td>
<td>Likes being organised</td>
<td>Helps solve arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Likes to sing/ rap</td>
<td>Ability to reason</td>
<td>Knows own strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Plays with objects while listening</td>
<td>Good colour sense</td>
<td>Uses logical approach</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Good negotiator</td>
<td>Imagines scenes from music</td>
<td>Likes to listen</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Very private person</td>
<td>Fidgety if there are few breaks</td>
<td>Remembers in pictures</td>
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To get an idea of your 'mix', shade ONE square for each of the answers you have ticked column by column.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Linguistic</th>
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<th>Visual-Spatial</th>
<th>Bodily-Kinaesthetic</th>
<th>Musical</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Intuitive</th>
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Appendix K

Exemplars of School Record Documents

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<th>S</th>
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</table>

TARGETING YEAR 7 PUPILS

The following pupils achieved Level 5 in at least one subject for their SAT's results. Most of them have a high reading age as well, making them our potential top group in Year 7.

Until we receive further results from the CAT's testing, which will take place during the week before half-term, please will you target these pupils to ensure they are being stretched in your subject.

Thanks,

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forename</th>
<th>Primary School</th>
<th>RG Band</th>
<th>Reading Age</th>
<th>KS2L English</th>
<th>KS2L Maths</th>
<th>KS2L Science</th>
<th>SEN Stage</th>
<th>Free Meals</th>
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<td>109</td>
<td>86</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Cognitive Abilities Test

### GROUP SUMMARY OF RESULTS (alphabetical)

#### School:
- Class/Group: Y17A
- No. of pupils: 224

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID Number</th>
<th>Name of Pupil</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>CAT level: D</th>
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</thead>
</table>

#### Date of testing: October 1999

### Non-Verbal

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<th>Battery</th>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>SAS</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>NPR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>VERBAL</strong> (max. raw score 100)</td>
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<td>114</td>
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<td><strong>NON VERBAL</strong> (max. raw score 80)</td>
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<td>121</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The overall mean SAS for all batteries is 110.** Individual performance on each battery taken shows that this pupil is above average on Verbal Reasoning, above average on Quantitative reasoning and above average on Non-verbal reasoning.

### Key:
- 1 Above average
- 2 Average
- 3 Below average

### Cognitive Abilities Test

### INDIVIDUAL PUPIL PROFILES WITH KS3 AND GCSE INDICATORS

#### School:
- Class/Group: Y17A
- No. of pupils: 224

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>ID no.:</th>
<th>Age: 11 years 11 months</th>
<th>Sex: male</th>
<th>CAT level: D</th>
<th>Date of testing: October 1999</th>
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</thead>
</table>

### Indicated KS3 Levels with 80% Confidence Bands

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Subject</th>
<th>Level</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>67+/-0.5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>6+/-0.5</td>
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</table>

### GCSE Indicators with 80% Confidence Bands

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<th>Subject</th>
<th>Probability of achieving</th>
<th>Probability of achieving</th>
<th>Performance Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
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<td>67+/-0.5</td>
<td>51+/-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>6+/-0.5</td>
<td>6+/-0.5</td>
<td>51+/-15</td>
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### Important Notes:
- A pupil's SAS scores are only an estimate of true ability at the age on any one occasion. It can be affected by factors such as mood, illness, or external distractions. Therefore, the standard scores found in this report cannot be interpreted as representing true ability at the time of testing. However, the test's reliability is high, and the scores can be used to compare performance across different batteries.
- The range of scores is used to determine the confidence bands, which show the range within which 80% of pupils are likely to fall. These bands are used to identify pupils who may need further support or those who may be performing above or below average compared to their peers.

---

**XXI**
Year 9 pupils – academic information.

Following the Y8 reports, pupils were awarded 5 points for an A, descending to 1 point for an E.

**List 1:** Pupils on this list appear to be doing well, by gaining 50 or more points, the equivalent of at least 2 As and 10 Bs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>T.G.</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
<th>NAME</th>
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<td>Amy</td>
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**List 2:** The following pupils scored a maximum of 30 points, the equivalent of 6 Cs and 6 Ds at best. (Pupils with SEN are indicated).

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I hope this information is useful to staff to staff who may be meeting particular Y9 pupils for the first time. Any comments or observations please let us know.
Appendix L

Able and Talented Child - Draft Policy statement.

Introduction

This document is intended as a draft policy statement designed to be offered for consultation to a school working party, leadership group, and or, whole school discussion. It is not the intention of this document to encourage a purely elitist or hierarchical approach, but rather, to provide a structure which can meet the demands, and learning needs of all able or talented pupils within the school, encourage and celebrate their achievements, without detriment to other members of the school community.

Policy Statement

Definition

This school considers an able child to be someone, who exhibits exceptional natural skills, that set them apart from their peers. The use of the term 'able and talented', will ensure that pupils are not identified purely in terms of academic intelligence, but social, sporting or creative excellence also.

Identification

It is essential to identify those who fall into this category of special needs as early as possible, if their talents are to be developed to the full. This policy will focus on two areas of identification:
- To collect, analyse and disseminate effectively all information relating to the identification and monitoring of able and talented pupils.

- To establish and maintain a mentor programme to encourage and develop pupils.

- To be responsible for reporting all aspects of work back to the leadership group of the school, including the SENCO.