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Advanced Research Skills & Dissertation

The development of More Able and Talented pupils in a south Wales Secondary school

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DECLARATION
This work is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree MAEd Leadership and Management in Education and 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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Abstract

As teachers, we come across more able and talented (MAaT) pupils daily. It is a term given to approximately 20% of the pupils in Wales. The aim of this research was to ascertain the meaning of the term, educators’ perceptions of this and how MAaT pupils are identified, specifically in School X. The study sought to investigate how such pupils are supported, ways that provision could be improved and the impact that MAaT identification and guidance has on teaching and learning. This project is centred around a south Wales Secondary School consisting of 856 pupils. I aimed to identify the rationale for delivering a different curriculum for these pupils as guidance recommends that 2% of pupils would be considered gifted in all areas of the curriculum. The research was an ethnographic case study with data gathered from teaching staff in the form of questionnaires, interviews with senior and middle managers and a social media questionnaire to fellow education professionals. These data were supplemented by pupil questionnaires. This study found that ways of identifying MAaT pupils varied, ranging from teachers’ own judgements to the use of criteria set by the head of department. Every pupil is different, has different needs and to meet these needs, a personalised curriculum is required, though this is challenging in the extreme.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

The department for Education, Children and Life Long Learning (DCELLS) explains More Able and Talented as:

There is no universally agreed definition of the pupils who generally would be assessed as ‘more able’. Descriptions include genius, gifted, exceptionally able, very bright, high flyer, very able and more able. In Wales, we will use the term ‘more able and talented’ to describe pupils who require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for the general cohort of pupils.

(Wales, 2003, p.1)

The term more able and talented (MAaT) was adopted by the Welsh Government (WG) for what was formally known as ‘gifted and talented pupils’. Since the publication of The Learning Country in 2001 the development of the attainment of pupils has been at the forefront of Welsh education. (Wales. DCELLS, 2001, p.2). In this publication Jane Davidson, former Minister of Education for Wales, stated that all young people deserve equal opportunities. Ensuring that all receive choices that suit their individual needs, this entitlement caters for the vast array of learning abilities that we have within our schooling system. This includes students who surpass expectations across the school curriculum and those who demonstrate skills areas. They could be natural leaders, have confidence working as a team and display “entrepreneurial skills” (Wales. DCELLS, 2008, p.1). These MAaT pupils should be selected from all abilities ranging from pupils who would be considered of low ability with specific Additional Learning Needs (ALN) to pupils who would be classed as “high Flyers”. Within this array of abilities lie pupils of all abilities who would be classed as MAaT. Traditionally, this pupil would be the academic who would be gifted and talented in all areas of their school life. This is still the case for the top 2% of pupils in all schools. These pupils could be considered outstanding. (Wales. DCELLS, 2010, p.1). However, pupils that fall into all ability ranges have the potential to be classed as MAaT in at least one area of their school life. This view is supported by the Welsh Government (2008, p.2) who states, “All abilities and talents can then be nurtured through an enriched curriculum and extended learning experiences.” It is the duty of the school,
as educators, to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that nurtures the talents of everyone for them to flourish.

**Research Statement**

This research project studied the MAaT guidance within Wales and how was developed and provided at School X.

School X consists of 856 pupils aged between 11-18 years. In 2013, 164 pupils were registered as being MAaT in Key Stages 3 and 4 (KS3 and KS4). That equates to 19.2% of the cohort. This compared with approximately 20% of the total school population in Wales. (Estyn, 2013, p.1). Therefore, School X fell 0.8% below the average. However, it must be noted that School X was situated in an area of social deprivation, having many pupils who came from low socio-disadvantaged backgrounds (33% of pupils) with 27% pupils who were eligible for free school meals (FSM), which was 9.3% above the national average (Estyn, 2013, p.1). Considering that a great deal of research has been undertaken to document the link between socio-disadvantage and low performance, the attainment of pupils in line with the national average is a significant achievement for school X. In 2013, the then Minister for Education, Huw Lewis (Wales, 2013) noted "We know, in fact the effects of poverty are apparent before children even start school...By the time they are sitting their GCSEs the gap has grown even further.” Therefore, it was beneficial to highlight the strengths of the procedures undertaken by School X in identifying and supporting of MAaT pupils.

I sought to define and analyse the term MAaT and explored the varying nature of pupils who fell into the category. The study explored the guidelines that existed for the development of such pupils within Britain and Wales. In addition, the study examined the impact that such identification and guidance had on the selected pupils at School X as well as the effect it has on teaching and learning. The National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE) advised that schools should set their own measures by which to categories pupils, looking at the characteristics of pupils in specific subjects. (NACE, 2010).
Included in this was the support given to the various stakeholders such as the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) from the Local Education Authority (LEA), staff, pupils and parents. Finally, I intended to deduce the perceptions of staff and pupils in relation to this topic.

I investigated the guidance that existed in terms of identifying such pupils and the strategies employed by my institution in categorising them. I examined the various ways in which the literature suggested that MAaT provision be effectively implemented, and how this compared to the methods that were employed by School X. The research paid attention to the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders within education.

**Rationale**

Within Years 7 and 8 School X had a discrete MAaT group consisting of approximately 32 pupils per year group with plans to implement this in year 9 the following year. In my experience these classes (particularly in year 8) were difficult to teach for a variety of reasons. Occasionally, behaviour was poor across the year groups and the size of the class is problematic. I should point out, that I did not teach these pupils, these were my observations. This lead me to ask whether being classed as more able and talented had a detrimental effect on teaching and learning and if so, why?

To develop skills and talents of pupils one needs to dedicate time to hone the skills of these pupils. In addition, many MAaT pupils will only excel in certain areas except for the 2% of pupils who surpass expectations in all areas. Therefore, this posed a question as to why these pupils are classed generally as MAaT. They were taught as more able and talented pupils in all areas of the curriculum. If the research is correct, then this exceeds the 2% of pupils who are expected to be a ‘whole rounded’ MAaT child.

During its pre-inspection review in the summer term of 2013, Local Education Authority (LEA) of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) (2013, p.8) officials concluded that “[adequate] teachers do not plan in a way that is sufficiently differentiated, and as a result do not extend pupils’ learning
effectively, especially for the more able...” That is not to say that differentiation was not being practised by ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ teachers across the school. However, where teachers were deemed ‘adequate’ high quality education was falling short. The Estyn (2012) guidance supports such a need for differentiation. This publication acknowledged that teachers must do more to plan differentiated tasks for pupils of all abilities especially those who are considered MAaT in order that their talents be encouraged. Therefore, it was essential that this research project be carried out in order that we can identify ways in which to support ‘adequate’ teachers in providing differentiation methods that can be easily used across the curriculum.

Prior to School X’s Inspection in the winter term of 2014 the SLT provided training for staff on how MAaT pupils should be developed. Senior Leader X announced that “Individual children should be encouraged to develop their attributes, skills and potential within a learning environment that embraces equality of opportunity and provision.” (School X, 2013, p.12). Senior Leader X believed that it was important to develop the ‘whole child’. Once again it is acknowledged that all pupils no matter what their ability have the potential to be considered MAaT in at least one area of their academic life. Senior Leader X declared that, “Schools and individuals can thrive in a culture of ambition and aspiration...” (School X, 2013, p.13). She suggested that students need to be nurtured and developed under the watchful eye of their teachers and parents. School X recognises that they need to work closely with outside agencies, the cluster primary schools and the LEA. Despite this training and guidance, Estyn (2014, p.7) highlighted the very same weaknesses during their visit in the spring term noting that “Activities are not differentiated well enough to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.” Estyn (2014, p.7) stated that pupils were not being supported sufficiently in order that they make good progress. MAaT pupils’ thinking-skills were not being developed as well as the subject specific skills. Therefore, it was essential that the underlying issues were researched and resolutions were found and recommended. Estyn (2014, p.7) commented further declaring that pupils were uninterested in some lessons and within the same lessons pupils were not “challenged” sufficiently. Therefore, studying the ways in which effective teaching and learning of MAaT pupils was
being undertaken in School X and the suggested methods for developing such progression will ensure that activities do not fall short of the required standard in future. This research sought to highlight areas of strength and weakness within the provision at School X to better inform future provision for MAaT pupils to create learning opportunities to develop talents within pupils. This research informed future planning in standardising the quality of teaching and learning across the school for MAaT pupils. For this to be carried out correctly it was essential that pupils were identified accurately. Once identified, I explored ways in which pupils and staff could be supported to achieve maximum potential. It was necessary to determine whether every child had the potential to be talented in some aspect/s of school life, or whether there is a limit to the abilities of an individual. This suggests that only a select number of pupils have MAaT potential.

**Research questions.**

The research reported in this document was conducted during throughout the academic years of 2014-15 in a south Wales secondary school. Policy documents, school records of attainment, lesson observations, questionnaires and interviews formed the basis of my research.

The research was centred on the policy documentation of the Welsh Government, Estyn, as well as the Curriculum and Assessment Policy for Wales (ACCAC) document *A curriculum of opportunity: developing potential into performance* as this was the foundation documentation upon which MAaT was built in Wales.

The research questions (RQ) were:

**RQ1:** What is the definition of more able and talented (MAaT) and how are MAaT pupils identified in school X?

**RQ2:** How are pupils identified as MAaT supported in school X?

**RQ3:** What impact does MAaT identification and guidance have on teaching and learning?
Ethical Considerations

When carrying out Educational research it was necessary to adhere to the guidelines for ethics in educational research published in 2011 by the British Educational Research Association (BERA), which states that “Educational research is necessary for the advancement of knowledge for education and of education.” (BERA, 2013, p.3) To make progress within the areas highlighted above it was necessary to unpick the issues highlighted by the relevant bodies that had recently inspected School X. It is only then that we could highlight strengths and limitations of our practice and build upon these to make noticeable advancement.

To carry out the research it was essential that all participants were informed of the research aims and aware of the process that they were engaged in (BERA, 2011, p.5). It was important to inform participants of the nature of this research and my intentions to ensure that no deception was apparent. BERA (2011, p.6) states that all children who are mature enough to form and express their own opinions should be given the freedom to do so when concerning matters relating to them. The focus group for observations was the year 8 MAaT class and a random sample of MAaT pupils from each year group were chosen.

As with any research project those who had consented to take part will had the right to withdraw at any time during the study. BERA (2011, p.6). states that anyone involved in the study had the right to withdraw from the research at any time. If any concerns were raised I reviewed the issue and amend plans if possible.

When this research was completed it was essential that it be accessible to those whom wished to view it. BERA (2011, p.10) point out that “Researchers have a responsibility to seek to make public the results of their research for the benefit of educational professionals, policy makers...” I sought to place it in the School’s shared area and submitted a request to carry out a training session informing staff of the findings of this research. This research document is also kept within the school’s evidence portfolio in order that it can be viewed by anyone who wishes.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Identification and Supporting MAaT pupils

To determine whether pupils were receiving the best possible education to fulfil their potential it was essential that this research focused on Identification of such pupils, the roles and responsibilities of the school and the impact it had on the development on teaching and learning. The national framework for gifted and talent pupils was discontinued in 2010; speaking to the TES, Denise Yates, Chief Executive for Potential Plus UK said there was a large deviation in support that pupils had, “although some schools continued to develop strategies to ensure that pupils were stretched and challenged, others did not even identify their high-potential learners.” (Morrison, 2015). However, in 2012 of the new training pack developed by NACE, the then Education Minister, Huw Lewis (Wales, 2013) stated that there were “examples of good practice” in Wales, but consistency in the support given to these pupils was an issue. Although there was no framework there was a great deal of guidance present for schools to utilise. Perhaps the reason for this is that since there was a vast array of More Able and Talented pupils, and no school is ever the same. Tunnicliffe (2010, p.2) said that “There is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ policy document that can be bolted on to a unique organisation to ensure that the specific needs of its more able cohort will be appropriately met.” Therefore, all schools should have had rigorous identification and development programmes in place. Within School X (Self-Evaluation Report, 2014, p.31) more able pupils followed a differentiated curriculum in years 7 and 8 that was deemed appropriate to their needs. “Pupils in the more able stream have access to two MFL subjects (French and Spanish) in KS3” To say that one is MAaT in a certain area of school does not mean to say that they will be a MAaT pupil in languages, therefore this provision may have been failing our students. The Qualities, Curriculum, and Assessment Authorities for Wales (ACCAC) (2003) highlighted identification as an important factor in the development of MAaT pupils. It stated that “The process of identifying high level potential is complex and combines relevant information from teachers, parents and pupils with purposeful and objective testing.” With self,
peer and parental identification as important as teacher identification. ACCAC (2003, p.18) further suggest that schools must offer an “intensive programme of enjoyable and challenging activities.”

**Developing MAaT pupils**

Catering for MAaT pupils is in many an educator’s interest. The Sutton Trust (2012) supports this notion, but emphasizes that education has lost sight on how to nurture this group of learners. It states, “Teachers complain that the highly able have become a neglected group.” Some would disagree with this notion, having some of her career focussing on high attaining pupils, Deborah Eyre (Wiggins, 2017) believes in a “high-performance learning theory” whereby many pupils have the potential to achieve “academic success that are often seen as only attainable by the few”. She supposes that it is the school’s duty to develop these pupils. There was a great deal of emphasis on MAaT pupils at School X, Discrete classes had been set up (in Years 7 and 8). While it may have been true that MAaT pupils were being focused on, there was some truth in that their pupils had become a “neglected” group in terms of the way in which they were being catered for. It is indeed the duty of the school to provide for such pupils. How pupils of a MAaT nature be taught was still a source of great debate. The Welsh Government state that pupils must receive “Good teaching” and that this is the requirement for all pupils (not just MAaT pupils).

"It is characterised by planning more creatively, using more demanding resources, teaching pupils deliberately how to engage fully with the subject and creating a classroom climate where children are motivated to learn with increasing independence."

(Welsh Government, 2010, p.20)

This supported the notion that teachers were not being guided in the correct direction when supporting MAaT pupils and it was down to the teacher’s own professionalism to identify ways to encourage the development of individual learners. The key to quality education and the development of the talents is personalised learning. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2008, p.4) states “Personalisation can mean adopting a more holistic, person-centred approach to learner development, as well as more demand-driven, market-friendly approaches to system change.”
Personalised learning rests upon ideas and aspirations of pupils as opposed to actual abilities. Llewellyn-Williams (2013, p.254) suggests that this will cause a social divide with “articulate, professional class parents” gaining from personalised learning, thus dividing society. This is true for some pupils in School X.

**Welsh MAaT pupils contending globally**

With the official emergence of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 1997, it became more apparent that all the UK needed to compete on a global scale in relation to the development of MAaT pupils. Estyn (2012) report that the 2007 and 2010 PISA reports “…suggest that Wales has few high achievers compared to the top-performing countries in the world.” This led me to deduce that we did not have the correct guidance in terms of MAaT provision. Estyn (2012) agree in some part they stated, “There is too much variation in the support and challenge provided for schools by local authorities to address the needs of more able and talented pupils.” With this lack of vision in Wales, we should be looking to other countries for advice. A BBC news (2011) report stated that in Finland every child is viewed as equal, regardless of their socioeconomic background. “And it works...there is less variation between the most and least able students than anywhere else in the world.” Estyn (2012) found that in a minority of schools MAaT pupils from “disadvantaged backgrounds” provided systems to “overcome barriers to their learning such as low aspiration or limited access to extra-curricular opportunities”. If Wales were to compete on a global scale it was important that all learners be developed to ensure that those with the potential to become MAaT were identified and supported in their talents.

**The inclusion of Parents of MAaT pupils’**

Parental involvement was supported by the Welsh Government (2010), who acknowledged that parents needed support to develop their child’s potential. “Parents are also a source of information about abilities and talents their child may demonstrate out of school.” Estyn (2012) also acknowledged the role of the parent and that communication must be effective in developing talent. Estyn (2012) identify several
schools in Wales who had poor parental communication “in a significant minority of schools do not routinely inform parents that their children have been identified as more able and talented.” This would undoubtedly be detrimental in the development of MAaT pupils as pupils must have support both within school and within the home environment. In this respect pupils will be safeguarded from underachievement as teachers and parents will be able to monitor advancement. That is not to say that all parents are supportive of their children. Bloom (2015) supposes, where there is not a robust identification processes “…bright children who do not have pushy parents are often overlooked by schools.” There are MAaT pupils in School X who aren’t supported and encouraged by their parents who may remain unidentified. Equally, School X may not have been involving parents in their child’s education enough.

A Differentiated Curriculum for MAaT pupils.

The Welsh Government (2010) maintained that it would be essential for schools to regularly “discuss and review” MAaT pupils and have measures in place to “identify underachievement”. Those schools that were succeeding in their MAaT provision were those who appropriately identify, supported and challenge their pupils to achieve high standards. Estyn (2012) remarked that effective schools were using mixed methods of “…teacher assessment, standardised testing, observation, and parental and pupil questionnaires to identify pupils’ strengths and particular talents”. Therefore, correct nurturing of pupil talents requires very careful synthesis of many factors. Differentiation is a factor that should be addressed, due to the varying nature of learners a curriculum should be tailored ensuring that each student is provided with the best possible chance of maximising their potential. In their publication, A Curriculum of opportunity ACCAC (2003, p.27) stated that this would help tailor the curriculum to “challenge” pupils in order that pupils “full range of intellectual capabilities” are supported. However, as Grove (2010) stated that “this is not an easy thing to do in a class of up to 32 students, where the differential between the most able and least able could be several National Curriculum levels or grades.”
This proved difficult task when one had to consider the individual needs of every student. This is even true of pupils being taught as a discreet MAaT group as all learner’s needs are different. Llewellyn-Williams (2013, p.247) reiterates the complexity of this task “... it is the concept of ability and how to match the diverse spectrum of learners to tasks that match their needs that requires the most careful consideration.” It may be due to this multifaceted task that teachers were falling short of providing for the needs of their MAaT pupils. As a result, when Estyn are inspecting schools they are finding that “There are a lot of talented learners in Welsh secondary schools whose potential is not being developed fully enough” (BBC, 2012). Perhaps there is a difficulty generally in labelling pupils as MAaT. Tunnicliffe (2010, p.2) states, “There is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ policy document that can be bolted on to a unique organisation to ensure that the specific needs of its more able cohort will be appropriately met.” Each year schools must look at pupils, classes and the school and base its policies and methods of classification uniquely on the cohort.

Qualitative differentiation as defined by Renzulli 1997 and again by Riley in 2004 is a method of tailoring the teaching and learning curriculum to the unique needs of the learners. This will enable learners to move through the curriculum at their own pace as the interests and skill of the individuals will also be built into the curriculum. Thomson (2006, p.62) indicates that “Qualitative differentiation for gifted pupils will embody enrichment and acceleration together with curriculum compacting and flexible pacing.” Perhaps it is time that all pupils no matter if they are labelled with an ALN, SEN or as MAaT should be involved in creating their own Individual Education Plan with their teachers in order that the curriculum be tailored to their individual needs. Thus, giving teachers a broad and complex picture of the pupils they have in their classrooms. Such an initiative could have been implemented within primary school and cascade into the pupil’s secondary education. In an Ofsted (England, 2015) study into MAaT in England found that pupils who were classified as MAaT at KS2 were not being “prioritised” nor “sufficiently challenged” by schools. The link between primary and secondary schools must be strengthened further in order that the transition through the Key Stages be as seamless as possible. Ofsted (England, 2015)
urgently recommended that schools use the information given to them about MAaT pupils by feeder schools to help ease the transition process. This emphasis was true for Wales; however, very little discussion had taken place regarding teachers being familiarised with the similarities and differences between these areas of education. Secondary School teachers are often perplexed by the levels that have been given to pupils in primary school as their work quite often doesn’t reflect the ability that has previously been demonstrated. Caroline Whalley (2016) suggests that there should be a national programme of transition whereby all schools would adhere to an annual programme. This would ensure communication amongst schools. School X does have a schedule of meetings set up on a half-termly basis for staff form all feeder schools to meet and discuss transition. All departments at School X have a representative who attends these cluster meetings to improve the transition between primary and secondary and strengthen bonds between schools.

**Behaviour Management**

Frequently, the behaviour of the MAaT class had been a topic for discussion in School X. In its document, ‘Meeting the Challenge’ the Welsh Government (2008, p.11) discussed how “Young people who go on to be successful also need to have self-belief, perseverance and the courage to take risks.” This self-empowerment with such young people can also lead to arrogance due to their immaturity. The DCSF (2008, p.35) states “Academic ability can sometimes be far in advance of emotional and social maturity and young people may need support.” It was my intention within this research to determine pupils’ self-perception within the MAaT group at School X in so far as what confidence being labelled as this has awarded them. In addition, I sought teacher perceptions on pupils and the MAaT class persona and if they believed that it influenced the behaviour of the pupil and class.

Identification of MAaT pupils has its positives Hallahan & Kauffman (1982) (Cited in Education.com, 2010) propose “Labeling has led to the development of specialized teaching methods, assessment approaches, and behavioral interventions that are useful for teachers of all students.” This article was broadly based
on ALN and SEN students however, the generalisations made here were very much the same as when labeling MAaT pupils. The article also stated

> Labeling also qualifies students to receive services that they may not have otherwise been able to receive, such as instruction in a learning support room. In this setting the instruction they receive is at a pace much more conducive to their learning.

(Bright Hub Education, 2015)

School X had gathered the ablest students in the year group within one class. However, there were pupils within the mainstream classes that had been labelled as MAaT in some areas of their schooling and not discretely set. It was my intention to ascertain their perceptions to determine whether they were being treated fairly within the school system and if they were gaining the correct provision to suit their needs.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Researchers must accord due respect to all methodologies and related methods. They must contribute to the community spirit of critical analysis and constructive criticism that generates improvement in practice and enhancement of knowledge.

(BERA, 2011, p.10)

Careful consideration of which methodology fits this study best was important. Menter et al. (2011, p.52) advise that “There are good pragmatic grounds as well as ethical grounds for ensuring that research designs are carefully thought through” One had to ensure the correct methodology together with its methods were identified to gather the most accurate and reliable results.

For the purposes of this piece I conducted an Ethnographic Case Study. According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011, p.289) “A case study provides a unique example of real people in real situations”. Since I was a Middle Manager within School X the study will be conducted from an ethnographer’s perspective. As Denscombe (2010, p.84) advises that the ethnographer produces in-depth pictures of “events or cultures-descriptions” without the concern for wider effects. This research is based on an existing practice. Bell (2005, p.54) proposed that “The ‘case’ that forms the basis of investigation is normally something that already exists”. I intended to look at the already established and accepted forms of treatment of MAaT pupils. Bell (2005, p.16) states, ethnography is, “the study of people in naturally occurring setting or ‘fields’.” I did not intend to alter practice within School X, instead I intended to study the current practices. The focus was how pupils are identified as MAaT and what impact this had on teaching and learning and to understand the strengths and weaknesses of provision. This generated a picture of how this programme can be developed.

I intend to observe classroom behaviour from a section of the curriculum and compare behaviour with the results of the questionnaire they will complete. As Biggam (2008, p.123) suggests, ethnography is
“...the study of any culture, old or modern.” I intended to observe the cultural behaviour of this specific group. As a middle manager, having experience of formal lesson observations, I could make judgements on the quality of teaching and learning of the MAaT group, this provided an insight into the level of challenge within these lessons, and what effect it had on the pupils.

It was difficult to gain a completely impartial insight into the thoughts and actions of pupils, as inevitably, they were aware of my presence within the classroom and probably altered behaviour due to this presence. Equally, when conducting other modes of research such as group interviews (students), individual interviews (staff) the familiarity of the researcher and researchee no doubt slightly discouraged some individuals. Denscombe (2010, p.134) indicates that when studying groups and individuals there will be “behavioural changes” making it problematic to “attain true data.” Honest answers must be given to produce accurate results. It was necessary to use mixed-methods of data collection to gain an overall picture. However, Brewer and Miller (2007, p.23) indicated that case studies rely on analytical generalisation. It was not the researcher’s intention to produce an interpretation that merely generalises the facts. Denscombe (2010, p.53) advised that “to understand one thing it is necessary to understand many others and, usually how various parts are linked.” Bell (2005, p.116) advised that findings must be cross-checked using a range of methods to gain reliable results. “This-multi-method approach is known as triangulation” Brewer (2003, p.23) proposes that this is the norm, observing that “researchers tend to use multiple sources of evidence, including archival records, interviews, direct observations...” It was my aim to triangulate findings to produce a document that is as information rich as possible. Arthur et al. (2012 p.103) believe that this achieves “an in-depth understanding of cases through the triangulation of methods’ This will ensure the results are as accurate and detailed as possible. This will also increase the credibility of my study findings. (Menter et al., 2011, p.36)

To gain an accurate snapshot of the current MAaT provision within School X this research was cross sectional. Menter et al. (2011, p.42) suggest that all forms of data collection were only carried out with contributors once. They explain that the ‘cross-section’ of data collected is like “cross section of a tree
trunk… (for example, number of rings, age of the tree) is based on a particular section.” Therefore, I conducted this section of the study within the same timeframe and not to pilot this with the groups in School X. Instead, I piloted this study with a very similar group within a similar school and amended practice according to the weaknesses I found. Biggam (2008, p.146) sees piloting as a crucial part of research, he suggests that a pilot study be conducted if time allocation allows.

The study had to be as honest as possible and Menter et al. (2011, p.37-38) indicate that it is important that there be complete confidence between researcher and researchee and it is my duty to keep complete anonymity of all the participants. This ensured that the participants were as comfortable as possible giving completely honest answers.
Research Methods

To gain a full insight into the identification, provision and impact that School X was having on MAaT pupils it was necessary for me to plan the gathering of data thoroughly. Biggam (2008, p.146) indicate that preparation is key in any good research project. That being, having the correct research methods, gaining the views of those on the Senior Leadership Team, the teachers themselves and of course the pupils. I gained my Head Teacher’s opinion on the research methods. His input was invaluable in the data gathering process due to his insight into wider school issues such as MAaT.

I intended to use a range of evidence including, semi-structured interviews for staff (appendix 6), structured group interviews (appendix 7) for the MAaT pupils, a semi-structured interview with a private tutor, questionnaires for staff (appendix 3), a social media questionnaire (appendix 5) aimed at teachers, a pupil questionnaire (appendix 4) and lesson observations together with a review of available documentation from School X. It is necessary that a variety of methods are used in data collection, as Biggam (2008, p.118) specify that “more enterprising students use a mixture of data collection techniques, such as questionnaires, individual interviews and group interviews” This ensured that the results I gathered was reliable and far richer that if I had used only one method in this research. Burton and Bartlett (2009, p.22) state that “ethnography is characterised by ‘thick’ descriptive accounts of the activities of particular groups studied.” This was achieved by gathering information from methods such as interviews and observations.

Observations

I observed the MAaT pupils within a cross-section of lessons to examine their behaviour within an environment that is as natural as possible. Denscombe (cited in Bell, 2005 p.17) favours this method as it “enables researchers, as far as it is possible, to share the same experiences as the subject” However, this may be disadvantageous due to there being another person in the room when they are being taught, as people tend to behave differently within circumstances that are not the norm i.e. observations”. As Bell
(2005 p.194) suggests, “it is difficult to stand back and adopt the role of objective observer when all the members of the group or organisation are known to you.” However, this was essential if the results were to be an accurate reflection of everyday occurrences.

It was important that observations were as reliable and valid as possible. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p.129) state “fears that observers’ judgements will be affected by their close involvement in the group relate to the internal validity of the method.” I was mindful of this, however; as I did not directly teach the class I was able to distance myself somewhat, as they were not familiar with me as their classroom teacher.

**Interviews**

Interviews were essential in gaining an in-depth insight into people’s thoughts and feelings on the topic of MAaT at School X. Briggs and Coleman (2007, p.208) suggest that interviews are a way of exploring people’s “views in ways that cannot be achieved by other forms of research and report our findings in as near as we reasonably can their own words” They enabled me to question the interviewees further in order that they elaborate on the topic at hand. They ensured that questions are not misinterpreted as they could be rephrased or explained to the participants in question. Menter et al. (2011, p.128) state that interviews tell “us about the people’s reasons, interpretations and attitudes.” This was beneficial in gathering a whole rounded set of results that may not necessarily be merely fact based, but based on thoughts and feelings also.

Qualitative research was generated from such interviews. Biggam (2008, p.146) advise either remaining with a rigid interview schedule or having a flexible approach with a semi-structured questionnaire. In this case, I used semi-structured questionnaires for staff to gain a more fluid response and to probe further when interesting topics arose that needed further development. In contrast, for the group pupil
I adopted a more rigid interview format pupils to gain clarity in results. This is a benefits the interviewing process that will add to a more in-depth picture of MAaT provision.

It is important that I selected a range of staff and pupils to interview that represented the broad nature of the School. Menter et al. (2011, p.136) advise that the selection should mirror the range of individuals within the study while providing a broad, focused insight into the research. It will be important to choose people who would contribute positively to the research questions thus ensuring that the answers formed a range of perspectives.

**Questionnaires**

Questionnaires were valuable in gaining a range of viewpoints quickly. It was essential that the questionnaire was thought out carefully to gain a reliable and relevant set of results. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2010, p.180) state that “there is, of course, no such thing as the ideal questionnaire”. With careful planning and having critical friends to familiarise themselves with my project minimised issues and areas that I had missed. As questions can be read and interpreted differently, so can the answers given. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2010, p.179) point out, Interpreting the answers to questionnaires is “not as simple as it might seem”. I included a section for participants to add notes should they wish, but many (especially pupils) tended not to add detail in their responses as this is time consuming. They also suggest that “interpretation is the process by which you put your own meaning to the data you have collected and analysed, and compare that meaning with those advanced by others.” (2010, p.219) It was important to compare this information collected with that discussed in the literature review to ensure that any judgements and recommendations I made were creditable.

This method will provide useful in providing me with quantitative data. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2010, p.215) promote questionnaires as they are more efficient for quantitative analysis as they “…collect mainly discrete items of information, either numbers or words which can be coded and represented as
numbers.” The obvious means of data collection in this project however was be qualitative as this is more appropriate for an ethnographic study which relies on methods that provide detailed and complex data that can be woven into a narrative that is rich in information. However, Biggam (2008, p.131) states that if one is using closed questions in questionnaires, this provides information that can be interpreted as quantitative data. He maintains that “questionnaires limit the opportunity for in-depth exploratory responses, tending to yield answers that are easily quantifiable (six people said this, four said that, etc.).”

Sometimes, people may not have wanted to share their opinion at they were concerned about being perceived as negative and not supporting the initiative or may be received negatively by the readers. Participants should have felt reassured that their identity will remain undisclosed. Brewer and Miller (2007, p.97) suggest “Anonymity means that the researcher will not and cannot identify the respondent; for example, a postal survey which questionnaires are returned with no identifying label or codes.” I chose to complete an online questionnaire for data collection and honesty purposes. Menter et al. (2011, p.37) suggest that “depending on the sensitivity of the topic, the methods you employ will play a significant role in yielding full, precise and honest responses from the participants.” Within the questionnaire even I, as the researcher did not know their identity. This should have contributed to honest responses.
**Research Questions Matrix**

The following table provides a summary of research methods chosen and how they relate to the research questions.

**Table 1: Small Scale Research Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Method</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ1</strong>: What is the definition of More Able and Talented (MAaT) and how are MAaT pupils identified in school X?</td>
<td>Literature Interview Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ2</strong>: How are pupils identified as MAaT supported in school X?</td>
<td>Interview Observations Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ3</strong>: What impact does MAaT identification and guidance have on teaching and learning?</td>
<td>Literature Interviews Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The following chapter aims to explore and examine the above questions and reflect on their relevance to my own professional practice.
Chapter 4

Results and Analysis

In gathering and analysing data, I made the decision to make small amendments to the methodology and methods, but overall I was content with the results of the pilot study so amendments were minimal. However, I decided to add to the research by introducing a social media questionnaire aimed at teachers outside of School X to determine whether results in my school were typical of other schools in the local area. In addition, I added a further interview with a private tutor, who was a personal friend, on her request she took part in the research as she was interested in the topic and had witnessed the impact that not having adequate provision had on pupils.

Out of 34 teachers there were 26 responses to the online questionnaire, an adequate number of responses. However, I was allocated a 15-minute directed timeslot during a training day. Therefore, one would expect 100% of teachers to respond to the questionnaire as this was given during their directed time. An email was sent out to remind staff that the questionnaire needed to be completed and it was left open for a longer period just to allow for teachers’ busy schedules. There was no more that could have been done to ensure completion of this questionnaire. The Social Media survey (consisting of 28 teachers from other schools across the UK) was set up to validate the opinions of those in School X. The questionnaire had 12 responses. Again, there would be very little I could have done further to a reminder to the group to kindly complete my questionnaire if they had time to spare.

Of the 856 pupils in the school 164 pupils were registered as MAaT in 2016. Of these a random sample of 90 (15 for each year group) were chosen. This excludes year 13 as they were on study leave when the data collection took place. They were taken from the discrete MAaT groups in year 7 and 8 and from mainstream. Pupils were given the freedom to choose when to complete the questionnaire in their own time and it was kept open for a week. There were 46 responses in total, which accounts for 51% of MAaT pupils in the selection responding to the survey. This is disappointing compared with the pilot study,
where the response rate was far higher. Pupils were informed of the reason for the research and told that it would be in their best interests to complete this questionnaire as we were looking for the strengths and weaknesses of provision and how we could make progress and support them further. If this research were to be carried out again, a plan would be put in place for pupils to attend a session in an ICT suite during a lesson period to complete the questionnaire. This would ensure a greater number of responses.

**RQ1: What is the definition of More Able and Talented (MAaT) and how are MAaT pupils identified in school X?**

At the time of writing, there existed no national frameworks for MAaT, only guidance documentation. Senior Leader Y was asked her opinion on this, she said “each school has a different perception of what MAaT means to them. Every school has a different make up, with pupils with different needs”. She felt that schools tailoring their own curriculum was essential. However, the implementation of the policies and devising of a curriculum had been difficult. She said that she would have liked “a guidance document such as the Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF).” Most the staff interviewed and who responded to the questionnaire were positive in the support they were being given by School X in relation to this topic. One interviewee stated that “the school has come a long way since Senior Leader X was given the responsibility for MAaT provision.” (Teacher D) Another commented that “Senior leader X has come from a prestigious school that is well known for its development of MAaT pupils, she was definitely the right person to drive this initiative forward.” (Teacher E).

There were slight variations in the responses when people were asked to define their understanding of the term more able and talented. All people questioned understood the term. One such individual stated that being MAaT was “Not just the best in class, exceptional and can link multiple disciplines.” (Teacher A). Another participant claimed that it is a term given to “pupils who have a higher than average ability in certain areas of the school curriculum.” (Teacher B) This is most certainly true. The term doesn’t necessarily have to be relating to academic pupils. A MAaT expert, Ann Bridgland (cited in Stewart, 2008)
maintains that there exist pupils with exceptional abilities in every school. She said that in every classroom there are “pupils with some 'wow factor' about them. They might be a very good monitor or brilliant at showing people around the school.” Interestingly, there were some negative comments.

I’m not happy with the term, as it tends to focus on academic ability and talent - so I suppose in our current climate we immediately think of those who are keen to progress in academic subjects, and are able to do so quite independently. (Teacher C)

Teacher D remarked that MAaT is “a title given to a student based on data. I am teaching these children as MAaT without any knowledge of how they achieved the title”. This is contrary to the documentation issued by School X (2013, p.3) which clearly states that “all staff should be made aware of the criteria by which pupils are selected” This is an issue that needs to be addressed, this could be easily put right by allocating an hour training session for staff during a training day.

Within School X, data has never been released on how pupils have been classed as MAaT in an area. During an interview, Middle Manager A stated that the term is based on a “teacher’s best judgement” together with them using a set of criteria that has been given to them by their Head of Department. 4 of people surveyed on social media stated that they didn’t have any criteria to use when identifying MAaT pupils and they have done so with “very little training” Some teachers within this questionnaire even admitted to using criteria on Gifted and Talented pupils that they had been given at their last school.

1 teacher questioned didn’t understand how his department identified MAaT students. This is a pleasing result as most are aware of how they should identify students in line with departmental practice.

Unfortunately, he did not explain his response. It would have been helpful if he had as this issue may have been easily rectified. Staff comments were similar in nature. Some mentioned pupil observation other mentioned testing while few mentioned questionnaires. This supports School X Self Evaluation Report

All MAaT students are identified via departmental recommendations, whole school tracking, FFT targets or CAT data. Their progress is monitored via the whole school tracking data. A member of SLT is responsible for overseeing MAAT students. (2014, p.44)
This is in line with Smith’s (2006, p.194) advice “teachers may use information from a wide range of sources e.g. teacher checklists to structure observations of pupil dialogue or performance; group tests; self/peer/parent questionnaires.” To make progress School X should consider adopting parental questionnaires to gather their thoughts on their child’s strengths and weaknesses, this, coupled with teacher and pupil views could be useful in determining a whole rounded pupil profile. It is reassuring to know that most staff in School X are aware of how the department identifies pupils as MAaT (25 out of 26 teachers). This result was better that of the social media survey 4 of teachers responded as not having specific guidelines and so using their “own judgement”. This suggests that the guidance that exists for schools on MAaT is being followed in by School X.

Pupils felt that the MAaT class had “not been thought through” and teachers interviewed didn't feel that they had been given a voice in the implementation of this discrete class. Teacher A said, “If we went through a proper consultation process, we could have made the best out of the opportunity”. Teacher B said that they thought that the class had been created due to timetable constraints to tidy up the “slack hours within departments and secure jobs for certain teaching staff.”

The transition between primary and secondary has always been problematic for numerous reasons including MAaT Classification. Transition could be the main means of providing a baseline for identifying and selecting MAaT pupils. There are 6 feeder primary schools for School X and each has their own means of MAaT selection. During the group interview, pupils were asked if they felt that they had been given adequate support during the period of transition from primary to secondary school. The consensus among the year groups was “average support”, more could have been done especially relating to levels. Pupil C (Year 9) admitted

I was confused with my levels. I had come in to school on a level 6 in most of my subjects, but my first set of results from secondary school were all at level 5 and I didn't understand why.
In September of 2017 the University of Edinburgh will be introducing an MSc in transformative learning and teaching, which will qualify teachers to work across the phases. Writing in an article for the Times Education Supplement (TES), Kennedy (TES, 2017) writes that “our approach will, we believe, go some way towards addressing the issue of pupils disengaging and falling through the cracks.” She continues “…all our graduates will also have a deep knowledge and understanding of more than one sector.” This will hopefully set a precedent for other universities to follow suit as transition is an area of weakness in many schools. School X nor any of its feeder schools do not seem to be especially rigorous in the way they identify MAT pupils and this causes confusion. There needs to be a far more robust system of standardisation and quality assurance in the classification process for all schools in the catchment to ensure consistency of accurate identification of MAaT pupils.

**RQ2: How are pupils identified as MAaT supported in school X?**

57% of pupils surveyed were aware of their talents, whereas 43% of pupils claim to have not been told about their MAaT classification. There is no definitive guidance in notifying pupils of their MAaT abilities. 6 teachers who were asked on social media stated that it was sometimes useful and 4 disagreed. said no. There are no further data gathered from interviews and questionnaires to support or disprove this notion. Out of the twenty-three of comments made on this question one said that in all their subjects they had been told that they were MAaT. Others mentioned that they had been told they were MAaT a few of the subject that were recurrent in this section were English, Maths, History and Music.

During the interview sessions pupils and teachers said that there was very little support for parents and this needed to be amended. Teachers stated that they sent emails notifying parents of their child’s ability and copies of extra homework booklets had been sent home for the children. Lancashire County Council (no date, p.4) advise that the best performing schools in terms of MAaT provision ensure that “parents are involved in procedures for identification and target setting and contribute to support and review.” Senior Leader X declared that “this is an issue that needs be addressed. School X has a way to go in
developing this and we would be keen to find out staff ideas on parental involvement”. The Welsh Government (2010, p.5) advise that “Research suggests that parents value schools where staff are approachable, flexible, willing to listen and discuss possible courses of action openly.” Staff and pupils agreed that they would like to see more parental involvement. Isaac (TES,2006) identifies a Welsh school that has been recognised for its work with MAaT pupils and their parents. She writes “The school has fully involved the parents, who have been asked to fill in a questionnaire saying what activities their children undertake.” The school built the curriculum, organised training and after school clubs around the parental input. School X could use this as an example of good practice.

An open question was given to staff on the online questionnaire at school X on how they support pupils identified as MAaT. A variety of responses were given. Due to the variety of responses I altered the questioning on the social media questionnaire and set up a multiple-choice response to this question. The responses were split between 4 of teachers stating that MAaT pupils require a high level, 4 deeming a medium level or support to be acceptable, 2 deeming a low level and 2 feeling that no support should be given to MAaT pupils.

![Image of bar chart]

**Figure 1:** Levels of support for MAaT pupils according to Social Media questionnaire (n=28)

There was divided opinion within this question. However, most people surveyed suggested that pupils need a High-Medium level of support (67%). One respondent summed her views up stating:
I've put medium level, because it's the 'law of averages' - I think we expect more able pupils to want to take the initiative, to want to learn more independently, and who are generally more inquiring - but they all start somewhere! Eventually, we do see many pupils able to work and progress with virtually no support (Respondent A)

It is pleasing to think that pupils can work independently, with very little teacher input and some may make excellent progress needing little guidance in the classroom. A private tutor that I interviewed stated that she was a Governor of a school who nurtured pupils who were gifted and had a “graduate programme” whereby pupils level up, from Apprentice to Master. When pupils become masters, they can help others in the class. “I find the most effective way of ensuring true understanding is to have a child teach to another child.” This is an example of very good practice. School X could take inspiration from this. Stewart (2004) writes that pupils who are considered gifted in PE in secondary school in Brent can coach year 7 pupils during extra-curricular clubs without the need for teachers. Ramm-Harpley (cited in Stewart, 2004) proposes that the scheme "... contributes towards their academic success because it gives them confidence in their abilities. These pupils come from a range of backgrounds." This builds confidence in abilities and trains pupils for the outside world while also enthusing younger pupils to aspire to this.

During her interview, Senior Leader X reiterated School X’s guidance documentation about nurturing and developing skills “under the watchful eye of their classroom teacher.” She recognised that is difficult with 32 pupils in the class, but she said that “we have to do our best with what we have.” Of the teachers who commented on the types of provision for pupils within lessons independent learning featured heavily and challenging vocabulary extension activities. Some teachers stated that they provided GCSE style questioning to Key Stage 3 pupils and higher order thinking skills tasks. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (2008, p.22) concur, they advise “Programmes that encourage children to develop their ability to think logically and independently will help the gifted and talented to become more adept at taking control of their own learning.” According to the DCSF Independent thinking and learning is an important part of developing the whole child. In his article, Watson-Davis recommends that “[MAaT]
pupils can benefit from being guided to more complicated texts to support their learning, and should be encouraged to read around the subject independently.” (TES, 2006) 67% of teachers surveyed also agreed with this. Teachers were asked on both surveys if they differentiated their lessons for MAaT pupils. In School X, 7 teachers said always and 19 teachers said sometimes. In comparison with the teachers on Social Media, 8 teachers said always and 4 teachers said sometimes. There were several teachers who admitted to only differentiating during observed lessons. Writing in TES Gershon (2014) proposes that some would suggest that to differentiate correctly teachers should have a multi layered lesson. In other words, a teacher should have 32 different lesson plans one for each student and “run those lessons concurrently, flitting between platforms of learning to ensure that everyone’s needs are fully catered for in a bespoke way.” This is by no means achievable, and teachers would find themselves being “spread too thinly”. Gershon continues that we have lost the definition of differentiation and this shows “...how damaging a lack of concrete guidance can be.” Teacher D admitted that “there is so much demand on our time that differentiation often gets left until last minute. Sometimes we don't have time to do it.” This unfortunately is the stark reality of modern teaching. Teacher C acknowledged that “sometimes differentiating for a whole class with such a vast array of abilities can be so tricky, I tend to leave it.” Staff must have training on how to efficiently and correctly differentiate if we are to make progress. Boaler and William (cited in Llewellyn-Williams, 2013, p.248) conducted a study on teaching in Mathematics and found that mixed-ability setting was far more beneficial for pupils as it made differentiation essential whereas setting pupils encouraged the teacher to deliver a ‘one size fits all’ method. There is a valid argument here for having mixed ability classes and varying lessons to suit all needs as opposed to striving to stream classes at School X.

All the pupils interviewed wanted their views to be listened to and for Senior Management to alter their programme. When the question what they’d like improved they stated that they would love a more personalised curriculum where staff sat down with them, took them through their strengths and
weaknesses that their classroom teachers had identified and a curriculum be based around the collective findings. 31% of pupils strongly agreed and 54% of pupils agreed that when they were given opportunities to express their views, teachers took them seriously. Pupils felt they would like to be provided with improved access to ICT within lessons; 28% of pupils mentioned this on the pupil questionnaire. It was also brought up during the pupil interview. This was also supported by 73% of pupils disagreeing that they are given the opportunity to use ICT in their lessons.

RQ3: What impact does MAaT identification and guidance have on teaching and learning?

During School X’s inspection, Estyn (2014, p.5) records that “More able pupils demonstrate well-developed reading skills and read confidently when encountering unfamiliar texts.” This is generalisation on Estyn’s part as pupils who are identified as MAaT in subjects such as Maths, Technology or Physical Education may not necessarily be adept at reading. This is supported by the results of the questionnaire as all teachers disagreed that pupils are high flyers in all areas of school life. Some teachers and pupils stated that there are pupils who are excellent at Technology and Physical Education, who perform poorly in English.

All teachers disagreed with the statement that all MAaT pupils are ‘able’ in all areas of the curriculum. Writing in an article Stewart (TES, 2008) accepts this, writing that 15% of more able and talented pupils had not achieved 5 A-C GCSE grades. He notes that “the Government responded, saying that many of the pupils failing to reach the GCSE benchmark had been identified for their talent in sport or the arts.” The Welsh Government (2008, p.6) reiterate this notion, claiming that “ability and talent can manifest itself in many ways e.g. academic, practical, creative and social fields of human activity”. This led me to investigate the motivations of the Senior Management for creating a discrete MAaT class. Senior Leader X responded by saying,

The aim was to stretch pupils who were considered already exceptional in some subjects and hope that being around the top 24% of pupils in the year group would motivate pupils to become competitive.
However, when pupils were questioned on this they felt that they were being unfairly treated in some subjects. Pupil D admitted that the consensus in his class was that there was expectation from staff to perform in subjects such as languages where he didn't feel confident nor was he deemed MAaT. The setting of able pupils into discrete classes is contrary to the advice given by DCELLS (2001, p.2), who suggests that an enhanced curriculum be provided. The aim for MAaT pupils was to be included within mainstream, thus ensuring MAaT pupils have “...access to a range of opportunities and challenges to nurture their skills and ensure they reach their full potential.”

Some pupils interviewed felt that it was unfair that in certain subjects such as Humanities, they were taught bilingually (English and Welsh) and felt that they were falling behind in subjects they were ‘good’ at just because dual languages were being used. As mentioned previously in this document, pupils are not necessarily adept at all areas of the curriculum just because they are labelled as MAaT. Pupils felt powerless and that their concerns weren’t being listened to. As Estyn (2012, p.2) recommend the curriculum needs to be “individualised” and there needs to be “personalised approaches to learning;” All pupils clearly felt that the curriculum was not adequately tailored to their specific needs. In his article, Watson-Davis (TES, 2006) advises that “Allowing gifted and talented pupils the chance to shape their own lesson will also stretch them.” Listening to the views of the pupils themselves is imperative if the provision for MAaT pupils is to be a success, particularly in the diverse MAaT groups. It is extremely difficult in a class of 32 to personalise lessons and the curriculum to the needs of every learner. Another concern raised by the pupils was lack of specialised teachers, particularly in subjects being taught bilingually such as Humanities. Pupils were assigned a specific teacher purely because she could deliver the curriculum through both languages, not because she was the best teacher to be delivering the Humanities curriculum. Estyn (2012, p.2) notes that pupils perform best when they have “access to specialist teachers” Unfortunately, this was not possible, due to “timetabling constraints” (Senior Leader Y).

28% of year 7 were in the MAaT class when this research was being carried out. This is far higher than the
average (2%) as stated by the Welsh Government. Senior leader X responded during the interview by saying “this is a higher than average figure, while we accept that pupils in this class may not be MAaT in all areas of the curriculum, we wanted to challenge them to a faster paced curriculum.” His rationale was that “as a SLT we decided that we would rather this than them being spread across the year group and possibly being held back by others.” This lead me to question whether it is beneficial for pupils to be classed as MAaT and whether this has an impact on behaviour and performance.

Pupils and staff were interviewed and asked about the behaviour specifically of the MAaT pupils. There were several responses in the pupil questionnaire that stated behaviour was an issue. The pupil group questionnaire reiterated this notion. Pupils were questioned as to why they thought behaviour was problematic in the discrete class and the unanimous response was that the class size was too big. They mentioned that in some classes the teacher struggled with teaching and this was backed up by the teachers interviewed who felt that overcrowded classes were not beneficial to learning. This is an issue that needs to be addressed if the teaching of these pupils is to be a success. Pupils also mentioned that the behaviour of some pupils was due to the fact either lessons were too difficult for some pupils and while others felt ‘held back’ by those who weren’t as adept at certain subjects. Estyn (2014, p.7) deemed that pupils in school X were “underachieving” and not “challenged” sufficiently. Pupils also said that they did feel this way in certain lessons, especially when the teacher was dealing with bad behaviour as opposed to teaching them. 6 out of the 12 teachers on social media were unsure if labelling pupils as ‘able’ was beneficial. Teachers and pupils were questioned on the benefits and drawbacks of the MAaT label. One teacher commented that:

Some students put undue pressure on themselves to achieve if given this kind of title. It's a case by case basis for me. Some pupils excel when they know others use it as an excuse to stop putting the effort into their work, as one pupil put it if they are talented then it 'comes natural to them'.

(Teacher A)

This is very much the case in my own experience. Some pupils find this kind of label a benefit, while others buckle under the pressure. 33% of respondents felt it was detrimental. Teacher B commented that “Overall no - it's great for the parents and pupils themselves, a real ‘demotivator’ for those who are not in
this group and it makes more work for the teacher.” A few teachers commented on this ‘extra workload’ and so I questioned middle management about this and they concurred that it did generate more work differentiating and marking materials, but it was in the pupils’ best interests. As the quality of teaching and learning improves, with appropriate differentiation, ‘good’ teaching becomes ‘excellent’ teaching as noted by Estyn (2014, p.7). The Welsh Government (2008) point out that to provide for more able learners the curriculum must be extended. It is advised in this document that “the teacher uses his/her professional skills and action research methodology – carefully monitored – to make adjustments based on evidence.” This is exactly what this small-scale research intends to do.

The behaviour in the discrete MAaT class needs addressing. I witnessed this, first hand during my observation sessions. The pupils struggled to fit comfortably at the desks and sometimes had to sit on the ends of tables. It was evident that these pupils struggled to complete work with 100% concentration. There were also numerous incidents of low level disruption and general rudeness within lessons. Pupils would often be off topic and having a discussion across the classroom to one of their peers. There could be several factors at work here. class size is a contributing factor, it is not a homogenous group as there are many inconsistencies in the identification process and has a wide range of abilities therefore it would be considered a mixed ability stream rather than a MAaT within this class. Not all pupils were MAaT in all subject so there is bound to be some areas of disruption due to boredom or not understanding topics. This does not make poor behaviour acceptable. Cigman (cited in Lepkowska, 2006) advises that “even if the education junkie is not getting the highest grades, teachers should be on giftedness alert,” She further recommends that “they [educators] should be on the look-out for boredom, rapid learning and high, if erratic, achievement.” The SLT need to consider this report carefully when planning the MAaT class for the next academic year. It is also advisable that they take the views of various stakeholders into consideration, such as pupils, parents, teachers and heads of department. This is essential if the MAaT stream is to endure any kind of success.
Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council (RCTCBC) observed that there is sufficient differentiation in School X. However, adequate teachers do not differentiate enough. Estyn (2014, p.7) concurred and said that differentiation was an issue in the school. All learners have individual learning styles and requirements and so to best cater for all pupils, one must determine their needs. The Welsh Government (Wales, 2003, p.14) suggests that Local Education Authorities can help school improve provision by “establishing an LEA policy on the education of more able and talented pupils and ensuring that the policy is developed in partnership with schools;” This is not something that had been implemented at the time of writing, it is a vital part of the support and guidance that School X needs to improve on its provision.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

This research has highlighted some very good practice at School X. Many of the strategies that were put in place were in line with the recommendations set out in the Welsh Government’s Meeting the Challenge document (2008). However, as is the nature of education, although there are many strengths, there will always inevitably areas for development. Due to the nature of this research (ethnographic case study), I was unable to alter practice at School X. Therefore, the impact of this research will be limited. However, the following conclusions and recommendations should serve as a guide for further development of MAaT provision at School X.

RQ1: What is the definition of More Able and Talented (MAaT) and how are MAaT pupils identified in school X?

At the time of writing, no framework existed for MAaT provision. Those interviewed agreed that this was an issue as it was difficult to implement a school framework. Therefore, School X could completely tailor their MAaT provision to suit the needs of their learners. All teachers and pupils interviewed agreed on a definition of MAaT and were positive in that the correct member of SLT was leading this aspect of school life. All agreed that being classed as able did not mean that a pupil was able across the curriculum, rather just in one or a few subjects. All were aware of the individuals they taught who were on the MAaT register. Many of them admitted to not fully understanding the criteria or knowing how pupils had been classed as MAaT. Although this is a difficult issue to resolve, it is not impossible, but it would require a lot of work on the part of the school creating an information pack on each child. School X had made some progress in alleviating the issues faced with the identification of MAaT pupils and subsequently, their transition into secondary school. However, this was in its early stages and lacked robustness.
RQ2: How are pupils identified as MAaT supported in school X?

Most pupils were aware that they were on the MAaT register, although not all pupils fully understood why they had been categorized as talented. A small proportion of the cohort were not aware that they were MAaT. That is not to say that they had not been told and this could support my point that these pupils do not belong in the discrete MAaT group or that the MAaT provision is not as rigorous as it should be. Some pupils identified that they needed more support in developing their talents and skills.

As the Welsh Government (2010, p.5) suggest, parental involvement is essential when considering support systems for MAaT pupils. Many teachers at School X stated that they emailed parents and send supporting documents home. However, this wasn’t consistent across the school. There needed to be far more parental inclusion and contact if the provision for MAaT pupils were to progress. There was a consensus among teachers that able pupils need a high to moderate level of intervention to establish trust with them so that they can work independently. Respondent A said more able pupils should be able to ‘take the initiative’, but some need guidance to progress. It is pleasing to note that 85% of pupils recognised that when their views were given, staff took them seriously. As they are major stakeholders in their education, it is of utmost importance that they be listened to when developing the curriculum. Class sizes were at maximum capacity and this was not conducive to learning. Therefore, this made differentiation even more problematic for staff at School X. This was supported by Estyn (2013, p.7) during their inspection.
RQ3: What impact does MAaT identification and guidance have on teaching and learning?

The number of pupils in the MAaT discrete groups at KS3 equates to 28% of the cohort. This is 26% above Wales’ and Estyn’s figures of 2% of the school population being MAaT in all areas of school life. There will inevitably be a small percentage of pupils who are MAaT in all or most areas of school life. However, it was impossible to identify these pupils in School X due to the discrepancies in its identification process. This is a contentious finding. It highlights that there are apparent inconsistencies in the identification of MAaT pupils. There is obviously work to be done on MAaT provision at School X.

There inevitably was however, going to be a small percentage of pupils who were classed as MAaT in many/all areas of school life, but it was not clear who they were due to poor identification systems. School X had worked diligently at promoting the notion that pupils can be MAaT in physical subjects as well as the academic ones. There must be emphasis on providing these pupils with the best opportunities. Therefore, it is essential that they be taught by subject specialists in all areas of the curriculum. There was no conclusive evidence from this research that suggests that teaching pupils bilingually has any benefit to the discrete class. That is not to say it doesn't benefit them, but more research is needed on this matter.

However, some pupils and their teachers felt that teaching all the discrete MAaT class MFL was not having a positive impact as they were holding able pupils back and few were exhibiting poor behaviour as they found this subject difficult to grasp. If School X takes these findings into account and based on this amends current MAaT policies and practice, there should be a noticeable difference in poor behaviour within the discrete MAaT classes.
Recommendations

RQ1: What is the definition of More Able and Talented (MAaT) and how are MAaT pupils identified in school X?

- Devise Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for MAaT pupils at school X and use these when planning provision. It is advisable to give pupils and teachers a voice in the selection process and provision with the aid of IEPs. If all stakeholders work together it will lead to a far better provision.
- SLT should review the selection method for the discrete MAaT classes at KS3 and consider reducing the class sizes as they are at a maximum at present, this is not conducive to learning.
- Gershon (2014) recommends training all staff to support with differentiation. To achieve this, the school must endeavour to develop a programme for staff members to better equip them to identify and implement an adequate programme for the most able pupils. To school must regularly review provision and documentation. Each cohort has different needs and a curriculum must be tailored to this.
- Develop parental involvement in the form of parental questionnaires to ascertain their views on their child’s strengths and weaknesses. It is suggested that parents be invited to ‘training days’ whereby they can learn to develop their child’s talents as well as helping them with any homework set.

RQ2: How are pupils identified as MAaT supported in school X?
• All stakeholders should be aware of the identification of MAaT pupils. This could take the form of letters home to parents and continuing to highlight pupils on the MAaT registers. Pupils could be highlighted in class as MAaT. There is scope for further research here, as potentially highlighting a pupil as able in a subject in front of their peers could lead to other issues such as isolation or bullying. A parental questionnaire should be useful in deciding what staff and pupils training needs to be carried out to develop the school curriculum and extra-curricular activities. This could form the basis of a further piece of research.

• Structures and plans must be developed on a class by class basis to ensure that all pupils are having the correct level of support from the teacher. The methods of differentiation have a part to play in honing of teachers’ abilities to cater for all pupils in their class irrespective of ability. Senior leaders at School X consider a drive on the developing teacher abilities to differentiate as efficiently as possible, thus minimizing teacher workload.

• Pupil views should be researched meticulously and included in the next phase of research. Many departments within the school provide a good level of self-promotion and public recognition of pupil achievement. School X should ensure that all departments provide a good level of self-promotion and public recognition of pupil achievement and embedded this into school policies.

• As Isaac proposes (TES, 2006) pupils need to be encouraged to become independent learners. A personalised curriculum should be designed around pupil needs with ICT built in across the curriculum (at the pupils’ request).

RQ3: What impact does MAaT identification and guidance have on teaching and learning?
• The curriculum and setting methods must be looked at when specifically considering the MAaT classes at Key Stage 3. There may be scope for setting pupils who are gifted academically and setting those who are gifted in the more physical subjects. The school should investigate further whether MAaT pupils be distributed across the year group and be taught in mixed ability classes once more. DCELLS (2001, p.2) suggest that the latter may be beneficial. There was such a varying degree of ability in the discrete MAaT classes that they could be described as mixed ability. It is inevitable that setting will still have its flaws as each cohort and individuals have different needs.

• Should School X decide to have discrete MAaT classes, every effort should be made to ensure that MAaT pupils be taught by subject specialists in each area of the curriculum, as non-specialist teachers were having a detrimental effect on pupil progression.

• School X research the strengths and weaknesses of teaching pupils bilingually to determine if this is a beneficial method for all (or at least, the majority) of the pupils at School X. Practice should be amended based on these findings.

• There is potential for a more in-depth study on MAaT provision. It is highly recommended that the senior leadership team examine the strengths and weakness of MAaT provision found in this paper and focus on developing research which would initially be based around the top 8% of each year group at Key Stage 3 (this is an adequate number of pupils to teach as a discrete MAaT class) and to determine a more fitting way to provide for their needs.
References


Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) Effective Provision for Gifted and Talented Students in Primary Education. Nottingham: DCSF.


England. Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (2015) Schools not doing enough to support most able students. [Online]. Available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/news/schools-not-doing-enough-to-support-most-able-students


Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (2013) *Pre-inspection Report - School X*

School X (2013) *Meeting the challenge MAaT provision.*


Appendix
## Appendix 1: Ethics Form

### CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

When undertaking a research or enterprise project, Cardiff Met staff and students are obliged to complete this form in order that the ethics implications of that project may be considered.

*If the project requires ethics approval from an external agency (e.g., NHS), you will not need to seek additional ethics approval from Cardiff Met. You should however complete Part One of this form and attach a copy of your ethics letter(s) of approval in order that your School has a record of the project.*

The document *Ethics application guidance notes* will help you complete this form. It is available from the Cardiff Met website. The School or Unit in which you are based may also have produced some guidance documents, please consult your supervisor or School Ethics Coordinator.

Once you have completed the form, sign the declaration and forward to the appropriate person(s) in your School or Unit.

**PLEASE NOTE:**
Participant recruitment or data collection MUST NOT commence until ethics approval has been obtained.

### PART ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of applicant:</th>
<th>Heidi Victoria Husband</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor (if student project):</td>
<td>Jill Llewellyn-Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School / Unit:</td>
<td>Education/ MAE 7030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student number (if applicable):</td>
<td>St20035070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme enrolled on (if applicable):</td>
<td>MAEd Leadership &amp; Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
<td>The development of More Able and Talented pupils in a south Wales Secondary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected start date of data collection:</td>
<td>10/10/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate duration of data collection:</td>
<td>One year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Body (if applicable):</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other researcher(s) working on the project:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve NHS patients or staff?</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve taking samples of human origin from participants?</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Does your project fall entirely within one of the following categories:**

| Paper based, involving only documents in the public domain | Yes |
| Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human tissue samples | No  |
CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

| Practice based not involving human participants (eg curatorial, practice audit) | No |
| Compulsory projects in professional practice (eg Initial Teacher Education) | No |
| A project for which external approval has been obtained (e.g., NHS) | No |

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, expand on your answer in the non-technical summary. No further information regarding your project is required.
If you have answered NO to all of these questions, you must complete Part 2 of this form

In no more than 150 words, give a non-technical summary of the project
Click here to enter text.

DECLARATION:
I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework

I confirm that I will abide by the Cardiff Met requirements regarding confidentiality and anonymity when conducting this project.

STUDENTS: I confirm that I will not disclose any information about this project without the prior approval of my supervisor.

| Signature of the applicant: | Date: |
| Heidi Husband | 30/09/16 |

FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY

| Name of supervisor: | Date: |
| Jill Lewellyn-Williams | 30/09/16 |
| Signature of supervisor: | |

Research Ethics Committee use only

| Decision reached: | Project approved | Project approved in principle | Decision deferred | Project not approved | Project rejected |
|                  | ✅               | ✅                            | ✅               | ✅                  | ✅              |

| Project reference number: | Click here to enter text. |
| Name: | Click here to enter text. | Date: | Click here to enter a date. |
| Signature: | |

Details of any conditions upon which approval is dependant:
Click here to enter text.
# CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
## APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

### PART TWO

#### A RESEARCH DESIGN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A1 Will you be using an approved protocol in your project?</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2 If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used¹</td>
<td>Click here to enter text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3 Describe the research design to be used in your project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Methodology: Ethnographic case study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Methods: Online questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, Structured group interview, Observations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sampling: All teaching staff at School X (34), members from social media teaching group (28), 10.5% of pupils (90) from School X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Qualitative and Quantitative data gathering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4 Will the project involve deceptive or covert research?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5 If yes, give a rationale for the use of deceptive or covert research</td>
<td>Click here to enter text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6 Will the project have security sensitive implications?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7 If yes, please explain what they are and the measures that are proposed to address them</td>
<td>Click here to enter text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### B PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B1 What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project do you have?</th>
<th>Some experience from previous studies at this school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B2 Student project only</td>
<td>What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project does your supervisor have?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some experience from previous studies at this school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### C POTENTIAL RISKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C1 What potential risks do you foresee?</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C2 How will you deal with the potential risks?</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When submitting your application you **MUST** attach a copy of the following:
- All information sheets
- Consent/assent form(s)

An exemplar information sheet and participant consent form are available from the Research section of the Cardiff Met website.

---

¹ An Approved Protocol is one which has been approved by Cardiff Met to be used under supervision of designated members of staff; a list of approved protocols can be found on the Cardiff Met website here
Appendix 2: Research Timetable

To ensure that the research is conducted as thoroughly as possible it is essential that a plan be set out.

Biggam indicates that “Preparation is absolutely crucial to successful data collection” (Biggam, 2008, P.146). I therefore had a timetable of research events planned for all involved to see. Please see figure 6 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring Term 2016</th>
<th>Summer Term 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Literature</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer Term 2016</strong></td>
<td><strong>Data Collection</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAaT Provision</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reflect &amp; Recommend</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflect &amp; Recommend</strong></td>
<td><strong>Write up lesson observation findings,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Write up Staff Interview findings,</strong></td>
<td><strong>Write up Pupil Group Interview Findings,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compile questionnaire data,</strong></td>
<td><strong>Formulate Recommendations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Create graphs and analyse findings,</strong></td>
<td><strong>Conduct research into the topic using journals, textbooks, the internet.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conduct literature and analyse the evidence in relation to the practice and documents found at School X.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6: MAaT Research Project Timetable**
## Appendix 3: School X Staff Questionnaire

### Staff Survey MAaT Review 2016

**MAaT Review 2016**

1. Please tell us which Faculty/Department you teach in.

2. Are you aware of which learners are categorised as More Able and Talented in your class?  
   - Yes / No  
   - Yes  
   - No

3. Are you aware of how your Faculty/Department identifies More Able and Talented learners?  
   - Yes / No  
   - Yes  
   - No

4. Do you differentiate work for the More Able and Talented learner in your class?  
   - Always  
   - Sometimes  
   - Sporadically  
   - Never

5. In what ways do you stretch and challenge the More Able and Talented learner in your class?

6. List any extra curricular activities/clubs/trips/etc that you provide to stretch the Most Able and Talented learners.

---

**ST20035070**

Heidi Husband ST20035070  
MAE 7030: Advanced Research Skills & Dissertation
7. List any extra qualifications that you have provided for learners e.g. music theory exams, grades on an instrument, dancing awards, county level at sports, Duke of Edinburgh, early or extra GCSE etc.

8. Have you looked at any websites for Gifted and Talented pupils?
   Yes / No
   ○ Yes
   ○ No
   If so do you have any suggestions how we can utilise these resources more widely?

9. Have you ever entered pupils for NACE competitions?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No
   ○ If yes tell us which ones.

10. Do you discuss MAaT pupils at department meetings?
    ○ Yes
    ○ No
    ○ If yes tell us how often...

11. Do you have a department representative for MAaT? If yes could you tell us who?
    ○ Yes
    ○ No
    If yes could you tell us who?
Appendix 4: School X Pupil Questionnaire

More able and Talented Pupil Survey

MAaT Review 2016

1. Please tell us whether you are male or female. / Wyt ti yn gywryw neu benyw?
   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Female

2. Please tell us which year group you are in. / Ym mha fiwyddyn wyt ti?
   - [ ] 7
   - [ ] 8
   - [ ] 9
   - [ ] 10
   - [ ] 11
   - [ ] 12
   - [ ] 13
3. Which subjects are you best at?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Art &amp; Design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Design Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Drama and Performing Arts</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. French</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Spanish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Humanities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Geography</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. History</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Religious Education</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Music</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Physical Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Information Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Other (name in comment box)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. Other

4. Which subjects do you think you are More Able and Talented in?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Art &amp; Design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. List any activities/clubs/trips/etc that you have been involved in because of your gifts and/or talents.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. My teacher gives me feedback (verbal or written) which helps me improve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. My teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
* 12. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the statements below?

(Answer 1: Strongly disagree  2: Disagree  3: Agree  4: Strongly agree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know what to do when I get stuck with my work</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can concentrate for a long time without being</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5: Social Media Teacher Questionnaire

More Able and Talented Pupils (MAaT)

This questionnaire is designed to investigate peoples awareness and understanding of MAaT and how this impacts on teaching and learning.

1. Do you teach MAaT Pupils?

Comment

2. How would you define the term More Able and Talented?

3. What level of support do MAaT pupils require?

- A High Level
- A Medium Level
- A Low Level
- No support

Please explain your answer

4. Do you read and follow the guidance (issued by school or externally) on catering for MAaT pupils?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- I don't know of any guidance

Please comment

5. Do you sufficiently differentiate your lessons to cater for MAaT pupils?

6. Do you think that classing pupils as MAaT is beneficial?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

Please explain your thoughts

7. Do you have a set of specific guidelines to identify MAaT pupils?

- Yes
- No
Appendix 6: Senior leader & Middle Manager interview

1. How would you define the term More able and talented?

2. What level of support do MAaT pupils require?

3. Do you expect staff to research and follow the external guidelines for MAaT as well as reading the school's MAaT policy?

4. Do you feel that staff/you sufficiently plan and cater for MAaT pupils?

5. Do you think that Classing pupils as MAaT is beneficial?

6. Is every staff member aware of how to identify MAaT pupils?

7. Are MAaT pupils high flyers in all areas of school life?

8. Do you feel that having a discrete MAaT group of 32 pupils is catering for the individual needs of these pupils?
Appendix 7: Pupil group interview

1. Have any teachers mentioned your gifts, talents or exceptional ability in any subjects?
2. Do your teachers have high expectations of you?
3. ‘Behaviour is generally good in lessons’ Do you agree?
4. Do you enjoy lessons?
5. Do your teachers support and challenge you?
6. What would you like to see improve within lessons?