

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF
GIFTED AND TALENTED POLICIES ON
INNER CITY SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND: A
CASE STUDY**

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Doctor of Education

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of various ‘gifted and talented’ initiatives, brought in by successive governments in the UK since 1999. The research employs the Case Study method in an inner-city London primary school. Data gathered from semi-structured interviews with teachers, teaching assistants, pupils, parents and senior managers was analysed, using a thematic method. Documents including the School Development Plan, Ofsted reports and internal policies were also analysed, as well as lesson observations.

A literature review encompassing both the history of ‘gifted and talented’ policy development and research on identifying and providing for ‘gifted and talented’ pupils revealed a notable lack of empirical research evidence as a basis for the policies. The emphasis on identifying ‘gifted and talented’ pupils in the policies, with less guidance about provision, possibly led practitioners to unfruitful and inaccurate directions.

The research was contextualised by a review of the role of the Local Authority, in which the school was located, in implementing ‘gifted and talented’ policies. The importance of this diminishing role was confirmed. The challenge now is how to disseminate future initiatives, with no clear way to communicate with school leaders.

The subsequent Case Study identified the strengths of the policies as raising awareness of the needs of this group of pupils, as well as finding a need for more professional development for teachers, which is unlikely to be met, since the policy was disbanded in 2011. Other findings showed that, whilst teachers have become more accepting of ‘gifted and talented’ policy, the lack of guidance about provision led to them using self-theories and professional experience to ensure ‘gifted and talented’ pupils have opportunities for challenge, with mixed success. More information, based on evidence-based research, needs to be made available to teachers to ensure they can provide effectively for this group of learners.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
Table of Contents.....	4
List of Tables and Figures.....	11
CHAPTER 1: Introduction	12
Personal and Professional Context	12
Background from the Literature Review.....	14
Research Questions.....	15
Overview of the Research	15
Background context to the Research.....	16
What this study aims to contribute to the literature.....	20
The Structure of the Study.....	21
CHAPTER 2: Literature Review	22
Definitions of ‘Gifted and Talented’	22
The Nature of Intelligence.....	23
Intelligence as a Single Dimension	23
Criticism of this Single Dimension View	24
The Liberal View of Intelligence	25
The theories of Steinberg	26
A Critical Review of Sternberg’s Theory of Intelligence	27
Critical Review of Sternberg’s Pentagonal Theory of Giftedness	29
Gardner and the Theory of Multiple Intelligence.....	30
A Critical Review of the Multiple Intelligence Theory	31
The Relation of Intelligence to Giftedness.....	32
Introducing Creativity - the Work of Renzulli and Others.....	32
Critical Review of Renzulli’s Three Ring Model of Giftedness	34

The Work of Gagné.....	35
Other Views of Personal Traits as Contributors to Giftedness	36
Identification of Gifted and Talented Students	37
Proponents of Vigorous Assessments	39
Multiple Sources of Identification Models.....	41
Identification Utilising Less Reliance on Testing	43
Provision for Gifted and Talented Learners	46
Higher order thinking skills for teaching G&T students.....	47
A critical review of Bloom’s Taxonomy.....	49
The TASC model.....	49
Integrated Curriculum Based Approaches	51
The Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM)	51
The Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM).....	54
Issues Raised by this Literature Review.....	58
CHAPTER 3: Institution Focused Study	60
Introduction.....	60
Rationale and Purpose	60
Sources of Information.....	62
The Institution – the Local Authority.....	64
The Role of the LA in implementing National Education Policy	66
Issues that emerged from the data	69
Funding.....	69
The role of the Local Authority in accountability	71
Evaluation of the ‘gifted and talented’ initiatives	73
Evaluation about LA Advisor role evaluating G&T policy.....	76
The National Training Programme for Leading Teachers	78
The use of the term ‘gifted and talented’	78

Elitism	80
Too many initiatives	83
Extra-curricular provision vs classroom provision	84
Conclusion.....	86
Relevance of the Institution Focused Study	88
CHAPTER 4: Methodology.....	90
Research Approach.....	90
Theoretical Framework	92
Conceptual Framework	93
Case Study	95
Why has the case study approach been chosen?.....	97
Advantages of the Case Study approach	99
Possible limitations of the Case Study approach.....	100
Reliability, Validity, Trustworthiness	101
Validity.....	102
Construct Validity	102
External Validity	103
Other measures of validity	104
Reliability	104
Multiple methods of data collection.....	105
Research context : The Case	106
Choice of school for the participant group – an “Average Case” ...	106
Research Context.....	107
Participant groups in this study	107
Methods of data collection	110
Interviews	111
Design of Interview Data	112

Issues of researcher / participant relationship in interviews.....	115
Observations	117
Documentation	119
Ethical Considerations.....	122
Utilitarianism	122
Informed consent	122
Avoidance of harm	123
Confidentiality.....	123
Deontological Ethics	123
Reciprocity	123
Avoidance of wrong	123
Fairness.....	123
Relational Ethics.....	124
Ecological Considerations	124
Ethical Considerations in research with children	124
Data Analysis	126
Choice of analysis for data	127
Summary	130
CHAPTER 5: Results	131
Introduction	131
Findings from the themes	133
Knowledge of gifted education policy and practice	133
Evidence from interviews.....	133
Evidence from documentation.....	135
Summary of findings about knowledge.....	135
In-School Provision -Interview data.....	135
In-School Provision – Teaching Arrangements	136

Evidence from Interview Data	136
In-School Provision – Challenge.....	136
Lesson obs evidence for InSchool Provision- Challenge.....	137
Documentary evidence on In School Provision - Challenge.....	139
In-School Provision – Differentiation	140
Lessons obs evidence on In-School - Differentiation	141
Documentation evidence on groupings and differentiation	143
Summary of evidence for In-School Provision	144
Outside Provision	145
Evidence from interview data.....	145
Documentation evidence on outside provision	146
Summary of evidence on outside provision	146
Identification	147
Evidence from the interview data.....	147
Summary	148
Participants’ attitudes to Gifted and Talented Education.....	149
Evidence from the interview data.....	149
Evidence from Documentation.....	151
Summary	152
Challenges in implementing ‘gifted and talented’ provision	152
Evidence from the interview data.....	152
Evidence from lesson observations	153
Evidence from documentation.....	154
Summary	154
Participants’ wishes.....	155
Evidence from the interview data.....	155
Summary of participant wishes	155

Senior Managers' Evaluation	155
Evidence from documentation.....	156
Summary	156
Local Authority Support.....	157
Evidence from the interview data.....	157
Main findings from the research	158
CHAPTER 6: Discussion.....	160
Research Question 1	160
Research Question 2	163
Research Question 3	166
Research Question 4.....	169
Summary	171
CHAPTER 7: Conclusions	173
Knowledge.....	175
In-school provision.....	175
Outside provision	176
Identification	176
Participants' Attitudes	177
Challenges and Participant Wishes	177
Unique contribution of this research to knowledge.....	177
Evaluation of methodology	179
Limitations of this study.....	181
Boundaries and generalisability of the research.....	182
Implications	184
Further Research.....	186
Glossary	188
References.....	191

Appendices	212
Appendix 1 Description of Participants.....	213
Appendix 2 Semi-structured interview	216
Appendix 3 Information Sheet for Participants	221
Appendix 4 Presentation to Brunel Staff Student Conference	224
Appendix 5 Gifted and Talented Policy.....	228
Appendix 6 School Teaching and Learning Policy	232
Appendix 7 Maths Policy.....	238
Appendix 8 School Improvement Plan 2012-3.....	239
Appendix 9 Ethics Approval	241
Appendix 10 Ethical Grid – Stutchbury and Fox (2009).....	261
Appendix 11 Details of Findings from the Data.....	268

Tables

Table 1.0 Outline of key gifted and talented initiatives (Brady and Koshy, 2013)....	17
Table 2.0 Relationship between literature reviewed and research questions.....	59
Table 4.0 Denscombe’s Elements of a Case Study and how they are addressed	977
Table 4.1 Relevant Situations for Different Research Methods	98
Table 4.2 The utilisation of Denscombe’s advantages of using multiple methods .	106
Table 4.3 Targets for groups of participants	108
Table 4.4 Grid analysing questions for semi-structured interview	112
Table 4.5 Key themes addressed in interview	1133
Table 4.6 Strengths and weaknesses of document review as source of evidence	12020
Table 4.7 Ethical Frameworks	122
Table 4.8 Possible bases for differentiating children from adults	1255
Table 5.0 Codes used for participants.....	1311
Table 5.1 Relationship between data sources, participants and research questions	1322
Table 5.2 How themes relate to the research questions.....	133
Table 5.3 How proposed actions in the SIP reflect issues from the interview data	14040
Table 5.4 Summary of findings from lesson observations	143
Table 7.0 Relationship between research questions, themes and main findings	173

Figures

Figure 2.0 Sternberg’s Triarchic Model (1985).....	26
Figure 2.1 Sternberg’s Pentagonal Implicit Theory of Giftedness(2000).....	28
Figure 2.3 Gagné’s Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent(2005).....	35
Figure 2.4 The original Bloom’s Taxonomy(1985).....	47
Figure 2.5 Anderson’s Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (1994).....	48
Figure 2.6 The TASC wheel (Wallace 2001)	50
Figure 2.7 Dimensions of the ICM model(VanTassel-Baska 1986).....	52
Figure 2.8 Enrichment Triad model(Renzulli1976).....	55
Figure 2.9 The School-wide Enrichment Model (SEM)(Renzulli 1976)	56
Figure 4.0 Conceptual Framework for case study(Brady2015).....	933
Figure 4.1 The Case as the Unit of Analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994).....	966
Figure 4.2 Interview focus and framing (Scott and Usher, 1999 p. 112)	114

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

“Hide not your talents. They for use were made. What's a sundial in the shade?” – Benjamin Franklin

This study researches the impact of the ‘gifted and talented’ policies of the UK government through a Case Study of an inner-city primary school in England. In this study, the term national refers to England, as Scotland did not have the same ‘gifted and talented’ policies, and Wales is not within the remit of this study. The purpose of the research is evaluative, to make judgements about the effectiveness of the policy and draw conclusions about the future direction of ‘gifted education’ in England. In this chapter my own personal and professional motivations for undertaking this research and my rationale are presented, as well as the background context for the study, including the historical and political context. A brief overview of the literature reviewed in **Chapters 2 and 3** is outlined, to provide a general background, along with the structure of the study in the subsequent chapters.

Personal and Professional Context

My interest in gifted and talented education began before I became a teacher, as a parent. Before the days of ‘gifted and talented’ policy, the attitude of many teachers that I encountered seemed to be that the more able children were middle class, and in some way needed to be deprived of opportunities to “level the playing field” for other children. For example, one day, my 9 year old eldest daughter came home from school unable to understand why her teacher, when playing Beethoven’s Moonlight Sonata, was unable to recall what it was called, but did not allow my daughter to tell her as she held up her hand, patiently waiting to be asked. It seemed advanced knowledge was somehow threatening to her teacher, and that it needed to be suppressed in some way.

Later, after I trained as a teacher, my passion was to ensure that all my pupils were challenged and able to achieve as much as they could, regardless of their backgrounds. I wanted to create more opportunities, not less, and looking at the model in my own family’s life, developed a range of after-school clubs in my school, encouraging teachers to nurture and develop some of their special interests. Later, as

‘gifted and talented’ policies were introduced in England as part of a government initiative in 1999, a number of opportunities arose for more able pupils. These will be outlined in this and subsequent chapters.

During a training course learning how to teach mathematics in accordance with the then new national policy, the trainers asked for volunteers to run a Saturday Mathematics Project for ‘gifted’ pupils. I undertook the training, as part of a Department for Education and Employment (DfEE, 1999) funded initiative, meeting my supervisor Professor Valsa Koshy there, and ran the Saturday school, which I thoroughly enjoyed, as did the pupils. I have continued to run this project every year, even when I changed schools and local authorities.

I wrote an essay as part of that training, which gave me credits for a Master’s Degree. I became the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator at school, giving me responsibility for policy implementation referred to in the school, and used my Master’s credits to do a Master’s Degree in Gifted Education, but at the end of this, I still wanted to find out more about this area of education, and decided to embark on a doctoral study. I work in inner-city schools, and it is a great delight to provide opportunities for children to develop their gifts and talents, to try to open their eyes to new ideas and new ways of looking at literature, mathematics and other important aspects of the world and different cultures. As I have read more of the literature, so my ideas for working with able pupils from socially and economically deprived backgrounds have evolved, and my own practice has developed, which, as I have become part of my school leadership, has impacted on the practice of the whole school.

Undoubtedly I have benefited from the national policies I am evaluating in this study – it provided me with an opportunity to attend my initial Mathematics Enrichment Project training and the subsequent Saturday school, where I first started on this journey. I have undertaken Gifted and Talented Leading Teacher Training. Some of the children I have worked with have benefited from masterclasses and other enrichment opportunities. Attitudes have changed as a result of these policies, of that I am sure. My personal experience of most teachers in inner-city schools these days is that they value and welcome their able pupils, and want to challenge them, and rejoice

in their success. The main question, however, is how effectively did the national policies help teachers to do this?

Background from the Literature Review

One of the features of the national policies for ‘gifted education’ was a focus on identifying ‘gifted and talented’ pupils. However there was very little guidance on provision. **Chapter 2** explores what international theoretical models were available for identification and provision, although most of these were not reflected in any of the documentation received by schools and local authorities.

What is apparent from the literature is that precise identification of the ‘gifted and talented’ cohort is very challenging. In the United States, educational psychologists apply batteries of psychometric tests to aid identification (e.g. Kaufman, Plucker and Russell, 2012), but most schools in England, in my experience, do not have the resources to invest in such assessments. In any event, choosing appropriate tests is very difficult, and is dependent upon one’s view of the nature of intelligence, which is discussed in detail in **Chapter 2**, where international literature is reviewed.

There are several models of provision, some of which also take into account that precise identification has been considered difficult. Some possible models are reviewed in this study in **Chapter 2**, which could have been used to give more guidance to teachers in British schools. One issue that has been apparent is that enrichment was seen as the main strategy for ‘gifted education’ in the guidance given in the initiative’s Teachers’ Handbook (DCSF, 2007), whilst many writers (e.g. VanTassel-Baska and Wood, 2010) have emphasised the need for in class provision, for example, acceleration, (i.e. teaching ‘gifted’ pupils at a more advanced level than other children), as one of the defining features of a ‘gifted’ child is that they are performing at a more advanced level than is expected for their age.

Learning about possible ways of identifying and providing for ‘gifted and talented’ learners led me to compare what the research literature offered in relation to guidance contained in the UK policy. Along with my initial thoughts about the then Government’s decisions regarding the existence of the policy, I wondered how much class teachers in an inner-city school which had benefited from the ‘Excellence in Cities’ initiative, knew about ‘gifted’ education, and how the policy had impacted on

them. From this, not only did my research questions evolve, but it also helped me to determine the choice of school to study.

A starting point was the study of the Local Authority's role in the implementation of 'gifted and talented' policy in **Chapter 3**, as the link between the governmental level and the school which was the subject of this Case Study. This gave the study background context and gave me a better understanding of the influences on the Case Study school.

Research Questions

Thus, from my professional experience and my reading of the literature, the following research questions emerged, along with my choice of school to study. The research questions for this study are as follows:

- 1) To what extent have theoretical models of identification and provision for the 'gifted and talented' filtered into the policies within schools and consequently into classroom practice?
- 2) Has national policy on 'gifted and talented' education impacted on the practice of teachers in the school setting, and, if so, how is this demonstrated?
- 3) What are the attitudes of both the teaching and support staff in the school towards the identification of 'gifted and talented' pupils and making specific provision for them?
- 4) Have there been challenges faced by the school in providing for this group of children who were selected as a requirement of the policy?

Overview of the Research

The philosophical stance taken for the research is a constructivist approach. In accordance with this epistemological position, it follows that a qualitative approach is best suited for this research, because studying participants' views in more depth than is possible in quantitative studies allows the constructivist to build an interpretation of the phenomenon being studied. The method used is that of a Case Study (Bassey, 1999; Yin, 2009), offering opportunities to explore the selected school in depth.

Chapter 4 discusses the strengths and limitations of the Case Study approach as a research method, and how it impacts on this particular research. The aim of the study

is to seek the views of the various stakeholders in the school to evaluate the impact of ‘gifted and talented’ national policy on their school, and build up a coherent picture of the overall impact on the school as a whole entity.

In order to achieve the study’s aims, the design incorporated three methods of data collection – interviews with members of the school community at all levels, which constituted the main source of data, observations of lessons to establish how the philosophies of the teacher participants impacted on their classroom practice, which generated far less data than the interviews, and an examination of documentation relating to gifted education in the school, of which there was little (i.e. the Gifted and Talented Policy, The Teaching and Learning Policy and two Ofsted Inspection Reports). The participants included nine teachers, three members of the Senior Management Team (including the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator), eight ‘gifted and talented’ children, three parents and three teaching assistants. This represented the range of members of the community who have a view on ‘gifted and talented’ education and opinions on if and how the policy has impacted on the school. The choices of method and participant group are discussed later in **Chapter 4**. The aim was to construct a picture of the impact of ‘gifted and talented’ policies in this setting, from the perspectives of both those who deliver the policy and those who are the possible beneficiaries, i.e. the children.

The intention of this research is to explore the impact of ‘gifted and talented’ initiatives on a school that has had the opportunity to experience all of them. The study is exploratory, in that there were no preconceived outcomes to be confirmed, and I began the study with an open mind as to the outcomes.

Background Context to the Research

I have mentioned the role of the UK national policy in my own journey to becoming involved in ‘gifted’ education, the background to which is further explained in this section.

The Gifted and Talented policy began as part of a Labour Government White Paper ‘Excellence in Schools’ (DfEE, 1997). Concerned by a failure to stretch more able pupils in inner-city schools and anxious to attract middle-class parents into sending

their children to comprehensive schools, where there was a perception that “the pursuit of excellence was too often equated with elitism” (p.11), a ‘gifted and talented’ strand was developed, which became part of the subsequent ‘Excellence in Cities’ (DfEE, 1999) initiative.

‘Excellence in Cities’ (DfEE, 1999) became the mainstay of ‘gifted’ education policy encompassing 58 Local Authorities over 5 years in three phases. Schools in ‘Excellence in Cities’ were required to identify their top 5-10% of children as ‘gifted or talented’ – 66% of whom were deemed to be gifted (i.e. academically able) and 33% were talented (in arts or sports). Local authorities were given ‘ring-fenced’ funding to support the development of ‘gifted’ education, and how this was used in the area of this research is discussed in detail in **Chapter 3** (p 69-70). At first the policy was mainly aimed at secondary schools, and included university summer schools, World Class tests and a number of enrichment activities and partnership initiatives.

The policy was designed to combat the view of the equation of excellence with elitism, but was brought in during a turbulent time of rapid change, illustrated in Table 1.0, which shows some of the landmark events in the history of ‘gifted’ education policy.

Most schools identified a member of staff referred to as a Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator, and many of them received training as part of a national programme. Class teachers were responsible for identifying ‘gifted and talented’ pupils.

Table 1.0 An outline of some key gifted and talented initiatives (from Brady and Koshy, 2013)

1999	Excellence in Cities initiative brought in, including a gifted and talented strand
2002	National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) opened at the University of Warwick, funded by the government for 5 years
2006 onwards	Schools are required to identify a percentage of their pupils and inform the Department for Education
2007	The National Strategy for Gifted and Talented is introduced
2007	A new national initiative (Young, Gifted and Talented, YGT) is launched through a contract with CfBT
2007	The contract for NAGTY with the University of Warwick ends
2007	John Stannard becomes the National Champion for the Young, Gifted and Talented programme
2010	The contract with CfBT ends
2011	Funding for the National Strategies ends. Gifted and talented materials are transferred to the online National Archive

Since the inception of the ‘Excellence in Cities’ programme, there have been a number of evaluations of its effectiveness (Kendall et al, 2005; Pocklington, Fletcher-Campbell and Kendall, 2002; Ofsted, 2001; Department for Education and Skills (DfES) National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth, 2006). These pointed to the general success of the ‘gifted and talented’ strand of the ‘Excellence in Cities’ programme, but highlighted some continuing issues which remained barriers to progress. Among these were teacher knowledge, patchy provision, and difficulties with the process of identifying the cohort (House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee, 2010).

In addition to the local provision for ‘gifted and talented’ children, there was also some funding for national initiatives. The main thrust of these was the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY), based at the University of Warwick. As well as providing summer schools and other programmes for what Dracup (2003, p112) referred to as the “absolute population” of ‘gifted and talented’ young people from around the country (that is the 5-10% who were deemed to be ‘gifted’ in national terms, not relative to their own school context), they secured the place of ‘gifted and talented’ education within national policy, tracked the quality and improvements in ‘gifted and talented’ provision, and improved attainment at Key Stage 4 and Post-16 education (Department of Children, Schools and Families, DCSF, 2009). However, this was not seen as a significant contribution to the ‘gifted and talented’ programme in the Local Education Authority studied here, as suggested by their Local Authority Adviser (who was interviewed for Chapter 3), when she commented:

“And there’s never been much nationally, except for the National Academy for Gifted Children, and that never went down to primary level. And now that’s gone and not really been replaced with anything successfully.”

By 2006, all schools were required to identify their cohort of ‘gifted and talented’ pupils, not just those within the ‘Excellence in Cities’ programme. This paved the way for the next initiative – the National Strategy for Gifted and Talented. This was a national programme, requiring all schools to address the needs of ‘gifted and talented’ pupils, but it did not offer any funding. At the same time, the NAGTY contract at the University of Warwick was not renewed, as they did not request it to be (House of

Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee, 2010). An evaluation of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (DCSF, 2009) revealed agreement with the assessment of it, when it concluded that, whilst NAGTY had developed some good programmes and had found ways of identifying the national top 5%, the work was on too small a scale and therefore was too distant from the professionals in the classroom to make an impact there.

The contract for national provision was taken up in 2007 by a 'not-for-profit' organisation called the CfBT (Centre for British Teachers) Education Trust, although this was not the same form of provision as NAGTY provided. The provision was mainly in the form of online resources, and their role in research and evaluation was apparently unclear (Select Committee Report, 2010). The contract with CfBT was concluded early, and the provision apparently had little credibility with people working in the field of 'gifted and talented' education, as can be seen from the quotation from The House of Commons Select Committee (2010) report, when the Committee asked a witness if anyone regretted its passing, and was told "No" (Ev 12). The Local Authority Adviser from the Local Authority which is the focus of the present study, when asked about the service, said:

"It wasn't totally successful, let's put it that way.It wasn't successful for a variety of reasons and like a lot of things, just as it was starting to improve, it was stopped."

Prior to this report however, in 2009, the Government announced the end of the National Strategies in 2011 (a policy whereby areas of educational importance were prioritised, most notably the teaching of mathematics and literacy), including the Gifted and Talented Strategy, which had been in existence for just two years at that point. No other policy has replaced it, although the Government's expectation (enforced through the UK School Inspection system known as Ofsted) is that appropriate provision should be made.

The questions that arose for me from this decision were:

- 1) Was the government right to cancel the policy, because either a) it was not fit for purpose or b) it had fulfilled the aims it set out to achieve?

- 2) Are schools equipped to provide for this group of pupils without the aid of the guidance of a national policy?

These questions became the starting point for the development of my research questions.

What this study aims to contribute to this field of literature

The significance of the study is threefold. Firstly, it is an in-depth study of one school, encompassing a range of stakeholders in the school community, which could reflect similar issues in other institutions. There is a shortage of published papers on how Local Authorities and schools have responded to the policy. Building up a holistic picture of how a school has interpreted and used this policy provided valuable insights into possible failings in the policy, and also highlighted positive outcomes of it.

However, as it is a case study, there are limitations to how the results can be interpreted, which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. Secondly, linking the school's experience to the role of the Local Authority Adviser traces the path of National Policy being realised at school level, which is another unique feature of this study. Little has been written about the Local Authority Adviser's role, and yet in **Chapter 3** and also in **Chapter 5**, this can be seen to be pivotal in the implementation of the policy, and has led to a publication in an international journal (Brady and Koshy, 2013), although generalisation of the findings are again limited by the methodology used.

Thirdly, although it is a single case, and therefore is limited in how the findings can be generalised, "fuzzy generalisations" (Bassey, 1999) can be made, as can comparisons with the findings of other researchers in this area. In **Chapter 6**, where findings are discussed, links are made with the work of other researchers and their findings on issues relating to 'gifted and talented' education and related issues.

In addition to trying to address a shortage of research on a government policy which lasted a decade, the study also hopes to contribute to the historical policy context and its effectiveness. It is also hoped that practitioners internationally, who deal with educational aspects of educating 'gifted and talented' children, will find the outcomes of this study useful, by both adding to their knowledge base and for reflection. They will see, for example, that 'gifted' pupils do not always believe that they are challenged in lessons, although teachers tend to believe that they are providing sufficient

challenge. Although they recognise that they have a lack of knowledge in this area, and have been using their skills and knowledge of pedagogy to fill the gap, this is not consistently successful. This research also provides pointers as to how they could improve their provision, using empirically researched evidence methods.

The Structure of the Study

This study continues in **Chapter 2** with the Literature Review, where theoretical issues associated with ‘gifted and talented’ education are discussed. **Chapter 3** is the Institution Focused Study, which looks at the Local Authority Adviser’s role in implementing the policy in the Local Authority in which the Case Study school is located. In **Chapter 4**, the methodology behind the study is outlined. **Chapter 5** reports the findings from the Case Study, which are further discussed in **Chapter 6**. **Chapter 7** draws final conclusions and explores the impact of this research and what further research is needed in the future in this.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature to this study, encompassing definitions of ‘gifted and talented’ and problems associated with identifying this group, the potential need for special provision for this group of pupils and what such provision should entail, because the UK ‘gifted and talented’ policies were also concerned with these issues.

For this literature search, research from Britain and the United States of America has been used, as a number of influential writers in this field are American and have informed subsequent British research and practice. In order to understand the development of ‘gifted’ education it has been necessary to refer to some older texts, although where models have been updated, these are referenced. The aim has been to try to track the development in thinking and evidence behind current ‘gifted’ education practice, to later compare these with practice found in the school which is the subject of this study.

Definitions of ‘Gifted and Talented’

The term ‘gifted and talented’ is central to this study, and therefore it is important to define what this means. In this study, the term ‘gifted and talented’ refers to the English definition set out under the Excellence in Cities (DfEE, 1999) legislation, where Excellence in Cities schools were required to identify between 5-10% of their cohort for a ‘gifted and talented’ programme, as described in Chapter 1 (p.15). This group of students were defined as being the most able in the school’s specific cohort. The term has been problematic for teachers, some of whom view ‘giftedness’ as something more than ‘more able’, (House of Commons Select Committee, 2010). This issue is discussed extensively in Chapter 3. However, this definition of ‘gifted and talented’ does not address the nature of this group of students. Despite misgivings about the usefulness of this definition, this particular construction has been used in this study as it was known to the participants, and they had been operating under the policy using this definition, so it helped provide a shared understanding. Many well-known authors (e.g. Sternberg, 2004; Renzulli, 2005; Gagné, 2005) have presented

their views on what constitutes ‘giftedness and talented-ness’. This chapter seeks to explore a range of views of about what constitutes ‘gifted and talented-ness’, and also to trace the link between these definitions and subsequent identification of a cohort and the provision made for such pupils.

The Nature of Intelligence

Since intelligence is commonly thought to be a major ingredient in high ability, by lay people, teachers, and academics, it is important to address the nature of intelligence and its role in ‘giftedness’. In fact, the terms are often used as synonyms in common parlance.

Intelligence as a Single Dimension

Early studies of intelligence viewed intelligence as a single entity, which could be measured using a specific measure (such as an IQ - Intelligence Quotient - test). Some researchers (e.g. Plomin and Craig, 2001) still view intelligence in this way, and have been labelled as taking a conservative position on intelligence (Esquierdo and Arreguin-Anderson, 2012).

In the 1920s, writers such as Terman (1925) supported the hypothesis that a high IQ score leads to outstanding achievement. Modifying a test devised by the French psychologist Alfred Binet, Terman developed the well-known Stanford-Binet test. As a standardised measure, it can be used to compare an individual’s ‘intelligence’ with others from a similar age group. Other similar ideas have been developed to measure intelligence, such as Spearman’s (1904) concept of general intelligence (g).

Another feature of the conservative position is the belief that IQ is inherited (e.g. Plomin and Craig, 2001; McGue, Bouchard, Iacono and Lykken, 1993). Plomin and Craig define diverse specific cognitive abilities such as verbal and spatial abilities, processing speed, and memory. These inter-correlate into a concept of general ability, a key factor in what they consider is commonly called intelligence. Plomin and Craig have shown the inherited element of IQ to be as high as 80% in adulthood.

Criticism of the Single Dimension View of Intelligence

There have been many critics of this view of intelligence. Firstly, my own thinking is that if IQ is such a good predictor of future achievement (as it was designed for by Alfred Binet), then why is it that not all pupils with a high IQ secure future success? Renzulli (2005), for example, found that whilst there is a correlation between IQ scores and high grades in school subjects, they correlate from 0.40 to 0.60 and account for only 16 to 36% of variance in these indicators of potential.

Also, many writers have had doubts about the IQ test as a measure of intelligence. For example, some (e.g. Dweck, 2000) believe that IQ tests merely test IQ, and that this in fact is not the same thing as intelligence. Further claims that the tests work across cultures seem to be discredited by findings that the use of IQ tests for selection has impacted on the number of ethnic minority students being selected for 'gifted and talented' programmes (Esquierdo and Arreguin-Anderson, 2012; Ford and Grantham, 2003). Earlier writers (Eysenck, 1974; Jensen, 1972) have long believed underachievement in ethnic minorities to be a result of the inherited nature of IQ, implying racial differences in intelligence, but this has been a controversial position, and in my view, biased and unacceptable.

Differences have also been found in respect of gender (e.g. Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974), although a meta-analysis by Hyde and Linn (1998) showed that there were no significant differences in verbal IQ tests between boys and girls (these are the IQ tests which focus on language, as opposed to non-verbal IQ tests which provide tasks using symbolism and abstract concepts). Scarr-Salapatek (1971) and Guterman (1979) also discussed the differences in results between social classes, concerned with whether this is due to nature or nurture (Scarr-Salapatek, 1971), and whether this renders the tests invalid (Guterman, 1979). Guterman concludes that tests are valid, and therefore that people in lower social classes are there because of their lower IQ. These articles were written some time ago, when there was a greater interest in the use of the IQ test, and possibly reflect views held at that time. The prevalent view amongst education policy makers currently is that all social groups can achieve highly, as evidenced by the introduction of the Pupil Premium payments (DfE, 2010) to schools, to be spent on pupils from socially deprived backgrounds. Further reasons why exclusive use of

IQ tests are inaccurate and insufficient in predicting future performance are explored later in this chapter.

Many writers (Sternberg, 2000; Gardner, 1983; Renzulli, 2005) have developed theories which will be discussed later in this chapter that give other, and I believe more considered responses, to this phenomenon, all of which are based on the inadequacy of the IQ test as a measure of intelligence and a predictor of future success.

Another feature of the IQ test, and the philosophy of the conservative proponents, which has been questioned (Sternberg and Grigorenko, 2002; Dweck, 2000) is the idea that intelligence is a fixed state. This has been the justification for using IQ tests to select and categorise pupils, a system which, as has been discussed earlier in this section (p.24), has not been found to be a reliable indicator.

In summary, the single dimension, or conservative conception of intelligence is rooted in the earliest attempts to define the concept; although there are still researchers studying ways to improve the concept of a general factor for intelligence (Plomin, 2001), and with an interest in finding the extent to which inheritability plays a part. However, many writers (e.g. Sternberg, 1985; Dweck, 2000) have found that inequities have arisen from this view of intelligence, and that the tests used lack credibility as a predictor of future success, which they were designed to do. Therefore other ideas about the nature of intelligence were needed, leading to a more liberal understanding of it.

The Liberal View of Intelligence

The liberal position (Esquierdo and Arreguin-Anderson, 2012) was borne out of the frustration with the conservative position. Researchers such as Witty (1958) and Getzels and Jackson (1958) spearheaded this, seeing IQ tests as being too limited as they do not recognise creativity, and sought to broaden understanding of the nature of gifts and talents. Getzels and Jackson (1958) also saw a need to expand the definition without relying on IQ tests. Taylor (1975) viewed creativity as an essential part of this redefinition, whereas Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1975) turned the focus from problem-solving to problem-finding skills, seeing this as an essential component to

creativity. Also Tannenbaum (1983) believed that to be ‘gifted’, the individual should be a producer, rather than just a consumer, a view shared by Renzulli (1976), who thought that evidence of original products are of significance when assessing ‘giftedness’.

The theories of Sternberg

A major proponent of the liberal view is Sternberg, who has viewed intelligence from different angles. Sternberg (1985) developed two models of ‘giftedness’. His Triarchic Theory of Intelligence looked at both contextual and cognitive factors in what constitutes intelligent behaviour. The Triarchic Theory described the locus of intelligence as being within the individual, **and** in the behaviour of the individual **and** in contexts of behaviour (fig 2.0).

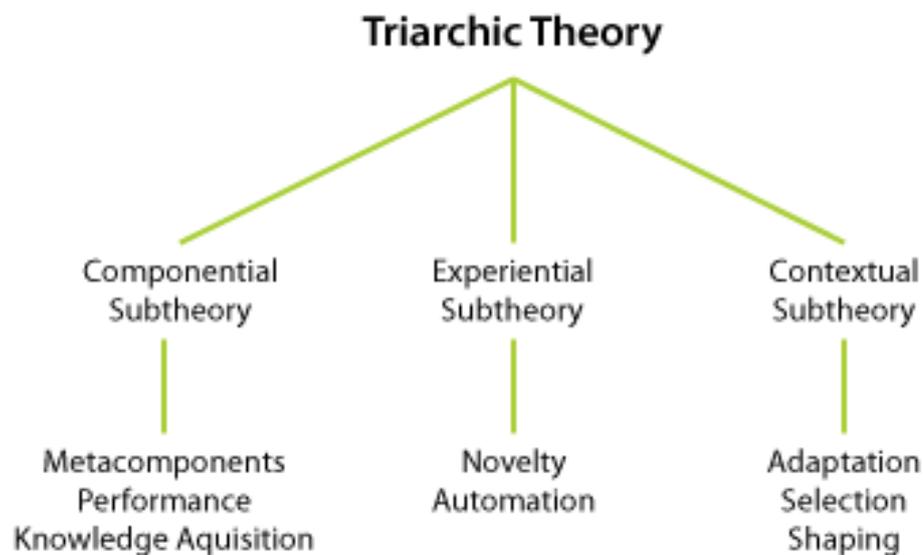


Figure 2.0 **Sternberg’s Triarchic Model (Sternberg, 1985)**

The Triarchic Theory attempted to explain the connection between an individual’s relationship to his or her own internal world and their experience as mediator between the internal and external world, and highlights three central aspects of intelligence. The basic unit of intelligence is the cognitive component, but intelligence can be assessed to the extent that the other components are brought into play, measuring intelligence to a

greater or lesser degree. It is not just the amount of the three sub-theories that constitute intelligence, but the way he or she balances these abilities that enable them to succeed (Sternberg and Grigorenko, 2002). Expertise needs to be developed and a high level of competence in the domain as well as initial ability. This is a more comprehensive understanding of intelligence than the single dimensional model, looking at different aspects that can affect intelligence, rather than seeing it as an entity with which an individual is born.

A Critical Review of Sternberg's Triarchic Theory of Intelligence

Sternberg has contributed to a movement that seeks a more inclusive view of intelligence, and makes links with abilities that individuals actually use in the real world, in contrast to the artificial and abstract testing methods of the IQ test. However, I can see that assessing the abilities of individuals within the three sub-groups would be difficult to do within an educational setting. Sternberg has developed a set of assessments for these but the reliability of these assessments has been questioned, especially, for example, the tests for creative and practical abilities (Grigorenko, 2009). Grigorenko concluded that better psychometrically sound assessment instruments, suitable for quantifying the abilities and tracking them developmentally are required. Gottfredson (2003) also criticised Sternberg's methodology as being unsafe – she believes he has utilised only his favourable data, and that there is insufficient data in any event, all of which is anecdotal, despite the appearance of hard evidence. She believes the massive body of evidence supporting the “g factor” outweighs any evidence that Sternberg has to the contrary.

Another aspect of Sternberg's work has been his work on people's self-theories of intelligence. Sternberg (2000), like Dweck (2000), asserted that everyone has ‘folk theories’ or implicit theories about the nature of intelligence, which has an impact on how they view their own intelligence, and therefore how they evaluate their own potential. In addition, this impacts on how they view the abilities of others, and how they respond to this has an impact on others, for example a parent or teacher with a child, or a candidate in a job interview. Sternberg's (2000) body of research encompasses exploring lay views of intelligence and cultural differences in this, as well those of ‘experts’ then drawing together common factors, the importance attached to them depending on factors such as the age of the child, or specialist area

of a professional. They include practical problem-solving, verbal ability and social competence. Other factors commonly mentioned were reasoning ability, creativity and learning ability. He also found cultural differences in views of intelligence (Sternberg, 2000) – for example, speed of mental processing is considered an important factor in Western societies, but some other cultures are suspicious of speed, believing it to compromise quality and depth. Rote learning is also prized by some cultures, such as the Chinese (Sternberg, 2000), but not in others.

Amongst the ‘experts’ group, Sternberg (2000) found there was general agreement about what constitutes some attributes of intelligence, such as abilities in adapting to the environment, in basic mental processes and in higher order thinking. However, Sternberg concluded intelligence is probably not one prototype. Whereas the Triarchic Theory set out Sternberg’s theory of intelligence, his Pentagonal Implicit Theory (fig 2.1) aimed to construct theory from people’s intuitions about what makes a child ‘gifted’. This theory pivoted around five criteria; excellence, rarity, productivity, demonstrability and value.

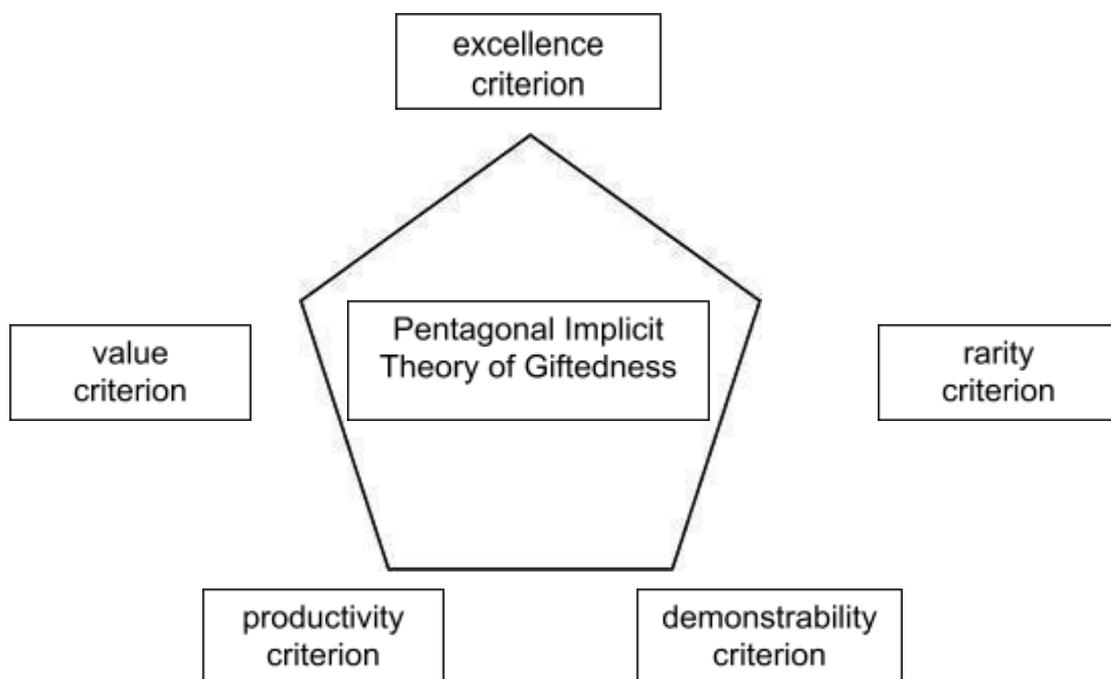


Figure 2.1 Pentagonal Implicit Theory of Giftedness (Sternberg, 2000)

In this theory, the excellence criterion states that the individual is superior in some dimension or set of dimensions relative to peers. It is important that this is seen in the

context of peers as performance advances as a child gets older, and may look unexceptional compared with an older child. The rarity criterion states that in order to be labelled 'gifted', the individual must have a high level of the attribute, relative to peers. The productivity criterion states that the dimension in which the individual has been evaluated as superior leads to (or potentially leads to) a productive outcome. The demonstrability criterion states that the superiority of the individual is demonstrable through tests that are valid assessments. Merely claiming 'giftedness' is insufficient.

Sternberg (2000) noted that this has become particularly important when evaluating 'giftedness' in school children where test scores have been used in the past, but where the previous reliance on these measures are being replaced with more performance and product based assessments, not because the implicit theory of 'giftedness' has changed, but what is considered valid as a demonstration of 'giftedness' may have. The final criterion, the value criterion, relates to the value given to the dimension of 'giftedness' by society. For example, a master criminal may not be deemed to be 'gifted' within wider society, although this still leaves the possibility for different cultural values as a basis for evaluating 'giftedness'.

A Critical Review of Sternberg's Pentagonal Implicit Theory of Giftedness

Sternberg's model could be criticised for its lack of empirical evidence, although the model does focus on the values societies have in relation to 'giftedness'. As a constructivist (a position that I discuss in greater depth in chapter 4), I find Sternberg's model a helpful way to view 'giftedness', which I believe ultimately is a social construct, based on comparisons between individuals and a relative concept. The lack of empirical evidence, however, could also be seen as a criticism of his methodology, which in this research is constructivist in nature, and therefore is susceptible to the same criticisms that positivists make of all of this type of qualitative research.

Another important factor that separates Sternberg from the conservative viewpoint is that Sternberg identified intelligence as dynamic rather than as a static state (2002), and that it can be improved by appropriate intervention designed to develop "successful intelligence" (p.265), which is explored later in this chapter (p 47 et seq). This is also a central feature of the work of Dweck (2000), who, like Sternberg, explored self-theories

of intelligence. She found that children who view intelligence as a fixed state (described by Stack and Sutherland, 2011, as the entity theory of intelligence) are more likely to be over concerned about looking intelligent and dislike challenges, which in turn prevents them from achieving what Sternberg called ‘successful intelligence’(p.265). However, those with theories of malleable intelligence (which Stack and Sutherland, 2011, call the incremental view of intelligence) believe that intelligence can be increased and therefore focus on making themselves more intelligent, rather than being concerned about how they appear to others. This finding again contradicts the idea that IQ tests measure intelligence, and that a test taken on a given date can act as a predictor of future success, as it appears that appropriate interventions can change outcomes for individuals.

Gardner and the Theory of Multiple Intelligence

Another notion that Sternberg described was the idea of specific domains of intelligence. Another writer who has written extensively about this is Gardner (1983). For example, he noted that IQ tests are skewed in favour of individuals who have had schooling and are familiar with pencil and paper tests. Indeed different cultures, as has already been described, have different notions of what intelligence is. Gardner therefore attempted to develop a theory of intelligence, which sought to synthesise knowledge of cognition, cultural and biological factors in intelligence, known as the theory of multiple intelligences. Defining human intelligence as entailing a set of skills for problem-solving, but also for creating and finding problems, intelligence also has to be genuinely useful or important, at least in some cultural settings. Gardner devised a set of intelligences (revised in 2011), which he did not claim to be exhaustive. These include: linguistic (‘giftedness’ in the domain of language, either learning new languages or being able to express oneself effectively through spoken or written language); musical (showing skills in performance and appreciation of music); logical-mathematical (‘giftedness’ in maths and other activities that require logical thinking); spatial (skill in understanding patterns and relationships of objects within space); bodily-kinaesthetic (aptitude for solving physical problems) and interpersonal intelligences (an ability to understand the motivations and desires of others and to work effectively with other people). Many of the people considered ‘gifted’ through outstanding school performance or high IQ score may have no talent in some of these

areas. Equally a ‘gifted’ sportsperson or musician may not score that highly in IQ or other academic tests.

A Critical Review of the Multiple Intelligence Theory

Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences are attractive to educators (for example, Klein, 1997) as they are inclusive, allowing a wider range of abilities to be valued, and justifying the importance of a broad and balanced curriculum. However, although Klein does not rank the intelligences in an order of importance, it does not stop others doing so. English educational policy, at present, places linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences as having far greater importance than the other intelligences up to the age of 16. This can be seen by the increased emphasis on the importance of English and maths in the National Curriculum and the choice of only English and maths tests in the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) in primary school. This counteracts the opportunities for inclusiveness that the theory provides.

The method Gardner used was descriptive, using qualitative methods, and therefore has been criticised by Gottfredson (2004), who is a strong believer in the g factor. She has criticised Gardner on the same grounds as she criticised the Triarchic Theory – that is, that Gardner’s use of anecdotal data, and his interpretation of this, is insufficient to challenge the body of research supporting the g factor. There is a tendency amongst some positivist researchers (for example, Cokley and Awad, 2013) to believe that quantitative methods are superior, as opposed to different, to qualitative methods, and this is sometimes reinforced by government policy makers, who demand positivist methodology when commissioning research, or taking it into account (Armstrong, 2009).

However, Visser, Ashton and Vernon (2006) developed tests for eight of the intelligences outlined by Gardner, and discovered the presence of g in most of them, concluding that the multiple intelligences are secondary to the g factor. That the g factor is a part of intelligence is therefore a possibility, and could concur with, or even explain, the “excellence” criterion in Sternberg’s Pentagonal Implicit Theory of Giftedness. Visser et al’s study sums up, for me, the conclusion I have drawn from my reading of the literature– that I do not deny the existence of the ‘g factor’, whatever it is that it measures, or that it correlates with high achievement, although not as highly as it

should, for all the claims that are made for it. However, for me, this is just a part of the jigsaw of what makes intelligence, and an even smaller part of what makes ‘giftedness’.

The Relation of Intelligence to Giftedness

As Sternberg moved from the Triarchic Theory to the Pentagonal Implicit Theory of Giftedness, his focus was on ‘giftedness’, rather than intelligence. This is mirrored by several other writers, such as Renzulli (1986) and Gagné (2005), who have developed models based on ‘giftedness’. As will be seen, these writers incorporate high ability (perhaps as demonstrated by the g factor) into their models, but do not see high ability as sufficient to explain the phenomenon of ‘giftedness’.

Introducing Creativity - the Work of Renzulli and Others

Using the work of Sternberg (2002) where intelligence is seen as a dynamic entity, Renzulli identified two forms of ‘giftedness’ – Schoolhouse Giftedness and Creative-Productive Giftedness. Schoolhouse Giftedness is demonstrated through test results, but for Renzulli this is not adequate to explain ‘giftedness’.

Drawing on the ideas of Csikszentmihalyi (1996) in attempting to define ‘creativity’, Renzulli identified three phenomena: The first of these refers to unusual and stimulating thoughts, called the ‘brilliant’; the second refers to people who experience the world in novel and original ways, the ‘personally creative’, but who may not share their discoveries with others; the third phenomenon is the group called the ‘creative’, who have changed the culture in some important respect. These are seen as three separate ways of being creative, possibly unrelated to each other. Csikszentmihalyi saw creativity as having three interacting elements: the individual; the domain; and the field, where the field relates to the people within the domain who act as the gatekeepers, as summed up in the following quote.

“Creativity is any act, idea or product that changes an existing domain, or that transforms an existing domain into a new one. (p.28)”

Renzulli (2005) argued that the development of creative-productive ‘giftedness’ aims to increase the chances of students becoming creative in the third way, and that their contributions will cause change. His Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness (fig 2.2) attempts to portray the main dimensions of human potential for creative productivity.

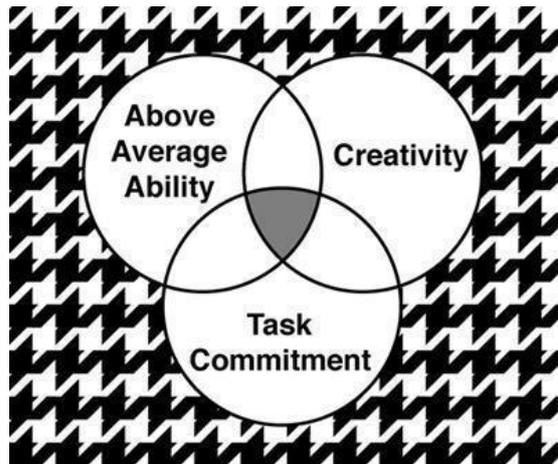


Figure 2.2 Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness (Renzulli, 2005)

Above average ability – High ability can either be general or specific in nature. General abilities could cross domains, such as verbal abilities or memory, whereas specific abilities relate to skills needed for certain domains. Specific abilities are not easily measured by tests, and need to be evaluated by other techniques. Within this model, above average ability refers to both general and specific abilities.

Task commitment – This encompasses concepts such as perseverance, hard work and deliberate practice (Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Romer, 1993). This motivation to focus on one area is intrinsic in ‘gifted’ individuals, although extrinsic motivation that supports one’s sense of competence can reinforce the intrinsic motivation.

Creativity - The final ring in the model relates to creativity, as described by the work of Csikszentmihalyi (1996). Renzulli warned, however, of the difficulty in assessing creativity objectively, to allow fair selection of students for special programmes.

Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Romer (1993) explored the role of task commitment in ‘giftedness’. Looking at a number of case studies of ‘expert performance’ from a variety of domains they conclude that far from being innate, ‘expert’ performance is a result of what they termed ‘deliberate practice’. Deliberate practice is not just time spent on practice, but focussed on improving specific skills. This requires the individual’s motivation to improve. They require brief instruction and informative feedback as a part of achieving the desired improvement. They should also repeatedly

perform the same or a similar task. Ericsson et al found that what had been attributed to innate talent is actually due to the amount of deliberate practice undertaken, and it also accounts for differences even amongst 'expert' performers. Usually the deliberate practice begins in childhood, and takes 10 years to achieve 'expert' status.

A Critical Review of Renzulli's Three Ring Model of Giftedness

It seems therefore that there is some corroboration for Renzulli's model. A major contribution of Renzulli is his proposal of motivation as a factor in 'giftedness', and how he looks at the interactivity of ability, creativity and motivation. Gagné (1985) finds this interactivity problematic however. Is it possible that an underachiever cannot be 'gifted'? Is someone with an IQ of 130 no longer 'gifted' because they are not sufficiently motivated to succeed? To my mind, an individual with an IQ of 130 and no motivation is merely potentially 'gifted', unless that individual is able to achieve highly without task commitment. Gagné also asserts that the creativity element requires identification, which may prove difficult given the tools that Renzulli has proposed. As found in Sternberg's (1985) work, it would appear that the more complex the model, the greater the difficulty in finding tools to measure the components of it.

A third criticism that Gagné makes is that Renzulli's model is not sufficiently domain specific and that it appears to refer mainly to academic achievement. However, if it is accepted that creativity and task commitment are required for all domains to achieve, I am not sure this is a justifiable criticism. Ericsson et al (1993) demonstrated the need for commitment and motivation in achieving in the field of music and other domains. However, does creativity play a part in exceptional performance in music or art? I would argue that it does. What makes a musician great, as opposed to merely competent, is their ability to interpret the work, and this is an act of creativity – they do not simply copy. Equally, in the world of sport the ability to create opportunities to gain advantage against an opponent, for example, is an act of creativity. The work of Visser et al (2006) found the g factor in all domains, reflected in Renzulli's model.

I have found Renzulli's Three-Ring Model of Giftedness useful and accessible. It explains under-achievement, and why some pupils in school who achieve very high grades find it difficult to achieve in some tasks – maths investigations for example, or composition in music. It is simple enough for a teacher, not versed in the 'gifted and

talented’ literature, to understand and use for identifying ‘giftedness’ in the classroom, whilst drawing from the work of writers such as Sternberg, thus utilising ideas from the liberal stance on intelligence.

The Work of Gagné

Many writers (Renzulli 2005; Sternberg, 2000; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) do not differentiate between ‘giftedness’ and ‘talent’ in their work, although, as has been seen (p.14), this is a feature of the British educational policy for ‘gifted and talented’.

However, Gagné (2005) has developed a Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT).

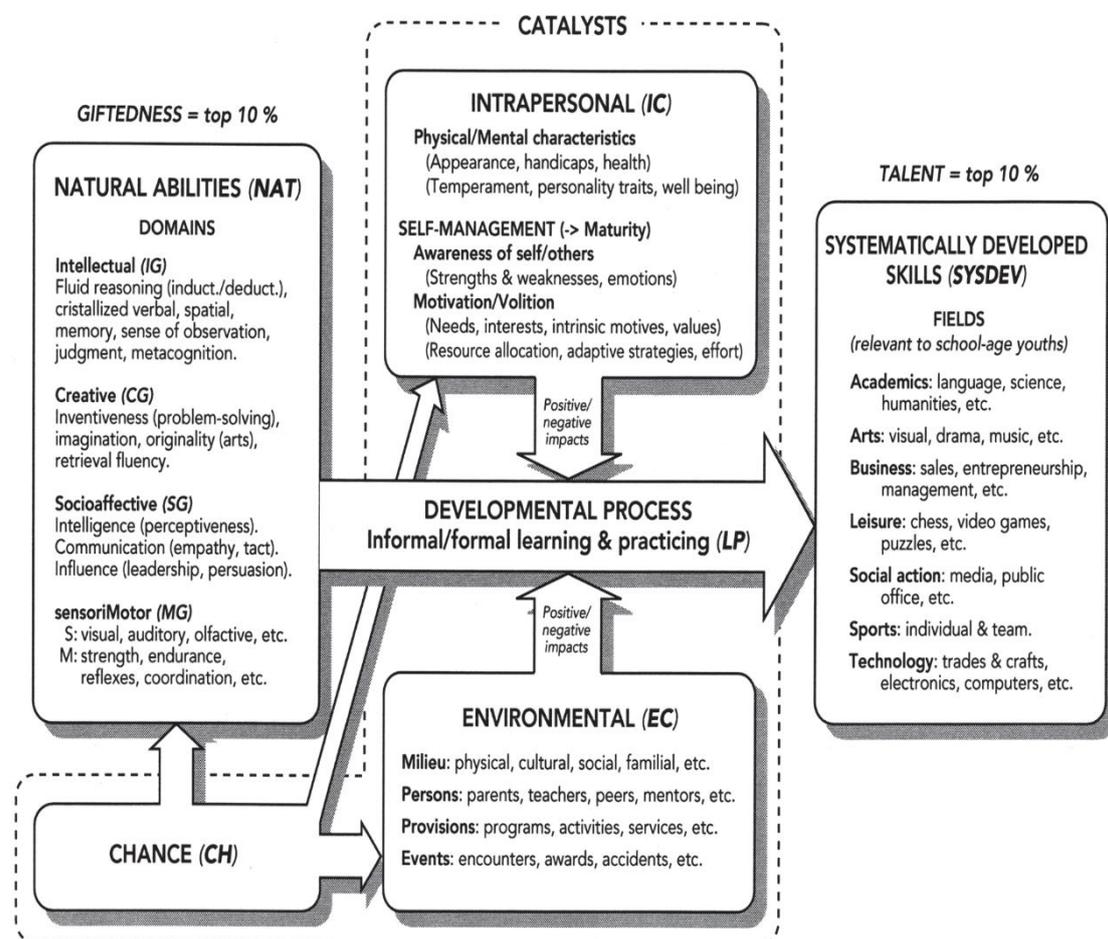


Figure 2.3 Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (Gagné, 2005)

In this model (fig. 2.3) ‘giftedness’ is the possession and use of outstanding abilities (called ‘aptitudes’ and ‘gifts’) in at least one ability domain, to a degree that places an individual at least among the top 10% of age peers: ‘Talent’ is the outstanding mastery of developed skills and abilities and knowledge in at least one field, to a degree that

places them in the top 10% of age peers in that field. This is different to the usual understanding of ‘giftedness and talent’ within British policy, where, as has been seen, giftedness has been taken to mean ‘giftedness’ as academic ability, and ‘talent’ as ability in areas such as sport and art.

It is to be noted that this model has introduced the notion of a quota, as is seen in the ‘gifted and talented’ education policy in England and Wales (DfES, 1999), although the definition of ‘gifted’ and ‘talented’ are different in the policy. Gagné (2005) introduced four other components to represent the complexity of talent development: intrapersonal catalysts (personal qualities such as physical and mental characteristics); environmental catalysts (such as parental or teacher involvement); learning and practising (systematically developed skills); and chance. This echoes themes from work previously described by Sternberg (1985, 2000, 2002, 2004) and Renzulli (2005). The work of Ericsson (1993) also referred to the learning and practising part of the model. Gagné, however, believed his work was differentiated from others in the distinction between natural potential and systematically developed skills, and the concept of talent being as important as that of ‘giftedness’. The introduction of prevalence rates (top 10%) also separates it from the other theories reviewed above.

Whilst Gagné’s model is very comprehensive, the terminology used can be confusing as it differs from other conventional ones. It also raises the issue, faced by writers such as Sternberg and Renzulli in their models, of how to measure non-performance entities, such as potential, in order to identify it. However, his work contributes a greater awareness of potential and a honed skill, and this is key when looking at gifted and talented policy in the inner-city, as this study does, in viewing potential as so important (Casey and Koshy, 2005). Also, the complexity of the model makes it more difficult for teachers to use in schools in this country, where educational psychologists are not available to use batteries of psychometric tests to assess for potential.

Other Views of Personal Traits as Contributors to Giftedness

Several writers have focused on traits associated with giftedness in recent years. Costa and Kallick (retrieved 2013, habits-of-mind.net) have added to the concepts outlined by Gagné, by including more prerequisites for ‘giftedness’. These included managing

impulsivity, listening with understanding and empathy, thinking flexibility, metacognition, striving for accuracy, applying past knowledge to new situations, thinking and communicating with clarity and precision, gathering data through the senses, responding with wonderment and awe, risk-taking, humour, thinking interdependently and remaining open to continuous learning. Equally Claxton (2010) in his work 'Building Learning Power' based his theory on the four Rs – resourcefulness, resilience, reflection and relationships - like Costa and Kallick (2013), looking more at the inter- and intrapersonal aspects of 'successful intelligence' (Sternberg, 2002). Both approaches emphasised the need for persistence, ability to collaborate and listen empathically and balance rigorous thinking with imagination. This did not so much constitute another model, as much as giving more depth to our understanding of other models such as those of Gagné and Renzulli. Many of these traits could be taught or developed under guidance, which gives a greater understanding of why, in Sternberg and Dweck's view, intelligence can change and be improved with the right intervention.

In summary, two schools of thought have been outlined here. The single dimension, or conservative, view of intelligence known as the g factor, is seen as being narrow and limited, and an uncertain predictor of success. Nevertheless, the consistency in findings of the existence of the g factor points to it being a part of what constitutes intelligence, but not the whole picture. On the other hand, the liberal schools of thought see intelligence as dynamic, complex and multifaceted. The drawback with research in the liberal school has been the difficulty in assessing less tangible concepts such as potential and creativity. However, the benefits of attempting to do so is to make identifications fairer to groups against whom IQ tests are biased, and that, by working on building up appropriate traits and behaviours, intelligence can be improved. Some of these models are very complex, and perhaps not so useful in the context of schools. Renzulli's model stands out as being relatively simple to understand, even if assessing for task commitment and creativity pose challenges. However, the models of intelligence are helpful in deciding who should be selected for 'gifted and talented' provision, which is addressed in the following section.

Identification of Gifted and Talented Students

The literature suggests that, due to the complexity of what constitutes 'giftedness' (e.g. Brady and Koshy, 2013), the difficulty of identifying the 'gifted' has proved a major

issue for professionals in the field. Problems of identifying an appropriate social mix, along with other problems associated with professionals identifying the cohort by the Select Committee (House of Commons, 2010) are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 (p.142). However, the literature has explored such difficulties critically. For example, Renzulli (2004) made the point that how 'giftedness' is defined should be underpinned by a theoretical rationale and this in turn should guide the process of identification, although the previous section described the difficulties of assessing pupils for traits such as resilience or creativity.

Proponents of Vigorous Assessments

The literature suggests that some authors believe in a very comprehensive identification process. For example, Feldhusen, Asher and Hoover (2004) looked at the difficulties in identifying the right students for programmes, pointing out that directors of such programmes are primarily concerned with validity, particularly as they face challenges from parents whose children do not get into 'gifted and talented' programmes. They identified five steps for a sound identification process:

- 1) The types of talent and ability targeted by the programme and the goals of the programme and the student
- 2) A nomination process based on validated tests and checklists
- 3) Individual identification processes that involve more than generalised tests, and which should be diagnostic in nature
- 4) There is a tendency to identify the all-round 'gifted' student, but the particular talents of each student should be identified
- 5) Programme directors should ensure that their methods used are valid.

Therefore Feldhusen et al concluded that identification procedures should be reviewed carefully, and questions of validity and reliability should be asked. Unfortunately, however, many programme directors (who in England would usually be teachers) may not have sufficient knowledge and expertise to follow through this process, which could lead to many mistakes in both missed identification and misidentification occurring.

The Talent Search Model, devised by Julian Stanley at John Hopkins University, is a much written about model, advocating a two-tiered testing system (Ebmeier and

Schulbach, 1989; Assouline and Lupkowski-Shoplik, 2012). It involves an initial standardised screening process, to select 'above-level students' (Assouline and Lupkowski-Shoplik, 2012, p46), followed by a 'Diagnostic Testing and Prescriptive Instruction' phase, where the area of 'talent' is specified and then developed accordingly. In other words, IQ tests may identify that a student may have a talent, but it does not identify what that talent is – if their 'gift' is for history, they will not benefit from a maths programme particularly.

Advantages of this approach include a wide variety of options available for students, and the power of the peer group as they are grouped with other people with a similar talent, offering a support network for the student, in programmes specifically designed for them (Assouline and Lupkowski-Shoplik, 2012). It also addresses the domain specific nature of 'giftedness', as described by Gardner (1983) and Sternberg (1985). Clearly this is a resource heavy model, requiring a good deal of specialist expertise at all stages of the process, which Assouline and Lupkowski-Shoplik (2012) suggest should be paid for by parents. This model of resourcing a 'gifted and talented' project would not fit in with the British model of educational provision at the present time, and generally provision is far less organised than the American programme – not many schools employ the sophistication of the psychometric tests used in this model to achieve identification of the more able.

Another issue with this model has been identified by Ebmeier and Schulbach (1989). They found that the standardised testing used meant that girls and ethnic minorities were disadvantaged, but the dilemma this presents is that were the thresholds to be lowered, this would interfere with the validity of the tests, because more 'non-gifted' students would be identified in the process. Despite the criticisms of the process (which Stanley and Brody (1989) refute as being unconstructive as no improvements to the testing procedures are put forward), Assouline and Lupkowski-Shoplik (2012) point to the enduring impact of this model, which was devised in the 1970s and is still in use today. The bias against ethnic minorities, social classes and gender (discussed earlier) remains a flaw in the tests, and it is questionable they should be used in a situation where a multi-cultural group of students are competing for places on a 'gifted and talented' programme.

Ford and Grantham (2003) believed that a conservative approach to identification impacts on numbers of students from ethnic minorities being selected for 'gifted and talented' programmes, and located the reason for this as a combination of deficit thinking about different racial groups, and also a view of intelligence that does not include the work of Sternberg's Triarchic Theory (1985) or Gardner's work on Multiple Intelligences (1985). Ford and Grantham stated that experiential learners prefer novelty and do not follow rules, whereas contextual learners adapt easily to new environments. These aspects are not measured in IQ tests, although may describe qualities that would allow an immigrant to make a successful transition to a new country. They recommended use of a test that is known to be less culturally biased than a standard IQ test, particularly the use of the dynamic Raven's Matrix Analogy Test, which does not give a fixed score like an IQ test. However, often the first step to being admitted to a 'gifted and talented' programme is a referral from a teacher, who may operate from a deficit thinking point of view, take account of issues such as attendance and have implicit theories of intelligence that are based on fixed rather than dynamic states (Dweck, 2000). Ford and Grantham's research highlighted the need for teachers to be properly trained in identifying 'gifted and talented' pupils and knowing how to conduct appropriate tests and assessments, and has tried to address some of the inequities in traditional testing.

However, some of the literature draws different conclusions. Looking at the under-representation of ethnic groups, Erwin and Worrall (2012) saw this as a result of a longstanding achievement gap in the United States by some ethnic groups. The under-representation is also due to a misunderstanding of 'giftedness' as a trait that some possess and some do not, an assumption that this trait is to be found in equal proportions across all demographic groups, and any system that does not reflect this is somehow biased. However, in sport or the performance arts, 'giftedness' is not about potential in a domain, but in what you actually do (Pfeiffer, 2012), and psychoeducational assessments are not relied on in these domains. Therefore, Erwin and Worrall concluded that prior achievement is the best predictor of 'giftedness', followed by IQ tests, disagreeing with Ford and Grantham (2003) that these are biased, and believing them to reflect the lower level of attained academic ability in ethnic minority students. However, their assertion that IQ tests are not biased is not backed up by the evidence available (Esquierdo and Arreguin-Anderson, 2012; Ford and

Grantham, 2003), and whilst it is true there is an historic gap in achievement, using prior performance as the primary indicator will only disadvantage ethnic minorities further. In my view, researchers have a moral obligation to find ways to include more ethnic minority students in programmes, rather than use existing (and old fashioned) methods of testing to support existing racial stereotypes.

Lohman and Gambrell (2012) believe that in order to include more students in ‘gifted and talented’ programmes, multiple sources of information need to be used. Non-verbal reasoning tests as a primary identification tool were seen as fairer to ethnic minority groups. They found that when such tests are used, non-verbal tests with more than figural reasoning abilities should be employed as short figural reasoning tests under-represent the domains of human ability, although are still a good predictor of human ability. Also the impact of culture, experience, practice and directions on the ability to reason with spatial forms is often ignored (Lohman and Gambrell, 2012). These tests are also not culture free and therefore have their own limitations.

Multiple Sources of Identification Models

Other writers have explored ways of finding multiple sources of identification for assessment. One important factor in ‘giftedness’ has been identified as creativity (discussed earlier on page 26), and Kaufman, Plucker and Russell (2012) reviewed ways in which creativity can be assessed. Using Divergent Thinking Assessments, such as Torrance’s Tests of Creative Thinking (Torrance, 1974), individuals are assessed across many different skills, such as completing incomplete pictures, being asked to find ways to improve a product, or finding an unusual use for an item. Kaufman et al reported mixed evidence as to the psychometric quality of these tests, and their predictive qualities, which led to a reduction in their use.

However, Kaufman et al (2012) stated that recent developments in the scoring of the tests have addressed some of these concerns. They do, however, look at other ways of identifying gifted pupils such as the Consensual Assessment Technique (CAT), which is based on the idea that the best measure of creativity is to compile combined assessments from experts in that field, who judge a portfolio of work. This method does not have standardised scores, but uses comparative scoring among participants. The next stage, which is currently being researched (Kaufman et al, 2012), is to

determine appropriate levels of expertise for judging different tasks, as, at present, judges rely on a few guidelines only.

In addition to CAT, assessors can be adults who know the child well, such as teachers and parents. This method is one favoured by the National Strategy for Gifted Education (DfES, 2007) and emphasises traits and abilities that are believed to be associated with creativity, and is generally domain-general, although domain-specific checklists have been produced (e.g. London Gifted and Talented, 2009). Many checklists are available in schools, and require a person who knows the child very well to assess the child. For schools, the advantage of this type of assessment is that they themselves are the best assessors of the student, whereas other assessments that have been outlined would often require a psychologist to conduct them, adding what could be a prohibitive cost to identification of this group of students. This type of assessment lacks the predictive validity of the psychoeducational tests, and validity is entirely based on the extent the assessor knows the student. Kaufman et al (2012) suggested they provide another piece of the jigsaw to “paint a picture of the student’s creative abilities” (p.67). However, checklists are usually domain specific, which might work well for a subject specialist in a secondary school, but in a primary school the teacher would have to consult up to ten checklists. This could be useful as a check if a teacher was unsure about a certain child, but they are unlikely to methodically measure check each child for each subject against the list of characteristics. It is therefore unwieldy and reliant on teacher identification in the primary phase.

Kaufman et al (2012) also indicated self-assessment as a possible source of identification, where someone is asked to assess their own creativity. Methods include creative personality inventories and creative behaviour checklists, where participants are asked to rate their past or current creative achievements. The obvious criticism of such a method is how well equipped children are to do this, and how the assessment would be affected by such factors as low self-esteem or a desire to make themselves sound more able than they actually are.

Kaufman et al (2012) concluded that creativity assessments have less validity and reliability than psychometric tests, and some are impractically long but that they do address the areas that IQ tests do not. They assert that creativity is both theoretically

and empirically related to intelligence, although it is only a small part of it, so the creativity assessment should not encompass the entire assessment, but should be included. However, creativity assessments address some of the disadvantages to ethnic minority groups from traditional testing because they do not rely on methods which have shown to be biased like IQ tests. However, the main purpose of creativity is as a part of multiple sources assessments that have been promoted by several authors in this chapter (Renzulli, 1988; Lohman and Gambrell, 2012). Looking at these measures is important in trying to identify all the complexities of ‘giftedness’.

Identification Utilising Less Reliance on Testing

Using standardised tests therefore raises issues of fairness, and may not be addressing the need to find the potentially ‘gifted’ as well as those who are already achieving highly. Those using assessments for factors other than the g factor have found difficulties in their validity, and others have issues with practicalities. This has led some writers to prefer to look at other methods to identify the ‘gifted and talented’.

The view of Birch (2004), for example, was that whilst it is desirable to ensure that ‘gifted’ children receive individually appropriate education, it is not necessary to institutionalise a process of identification. He saw ‘identification’ as a negative and limiting practice, particularly with the existing flaws in identification processes, which he believed should be replaced by ‘assess ↔ educate’ model, where curriculum embedded processes allow ‘gifted’ students to surface and have their needs met. Claiming that everybody using the current systems of identification (IQ tests or ‘multiple criteria’, e.g. school grades, parent and teacher nominations as well as IQ tests) knows that they are “perpetuating a fallacy” (p.3), he states that narrow identification leads to narrow education, what he refers to as the ‘identification → placement’ model. The model does not encourage teachers to pay attention to their part in children not being identified as ‘gifted’, or in the quality of what they offer ‘gifted’ children subsequently. Birch suggests an alternative model, known as the ‘assess ↔ educate’ model, which has five steps:

- 1) Assess abilities and potentialities.
- 2) Design an individual programme of content and instructional style.

- 3) Implement the programme against specific objectives.
- 4) Accomplish the objectives.
- 5) Reassess abilities, interests and potentials and repeat the process.

This model fits in with two educational concepts that have had a high profile in recent years – personalised learning (DfES, 2004) and assessment for learning (Black and Wiliam, 1998). The idea that careful formative assessment should inform educational provision for each child is just good teaching, although personalised learning does present challenges to class teachers, who have thirty personalised programmes to manage. It also relies on class teachers having a deep understanding about all the needs of their class – and whether or not teachers have this understanding is one of the issues the present study is investigating.

Borland and Wright (2004) similarly recommended the use of what they refer to as ‘site-appropriate’ methods, and present a model of three phases of Identification Process, beginning with Phase 1 – Screening, then undertaking Phase 2 – Diagnostic Assessment, and finally completing Phase 3 – the placement decision. Whilst there are some standardised tests used, these are not IQ tests, but more performance based tests, e.g. examinations. In addition, at each stage, there is also a combination of non-traditional tests, teacher, parent or mentor input. This a time consuming process, but is designed to address the lack of representation by economically deprived groups in ‘gifted and talented’ programmes. The question is: who going to be screened? Is it every student, or some pre-selected group? However, this model could be manageable in a school depending on the testing used.

Pfeiffer (2012) considered the notion of IQ testing as entirely unhelpful in the identification of ‘gifted’ children, using evidence from Borland (2009) and Sternberg, and Jarvin and Grigorenko (2011). He saw the concept of ‘giftedness’ as artificial in the main, although used a definition of precocity, or a child being developmentally advanced (Pfeiffer, 2009), as a working definition. Arguing strongly that identification should be achieved within a talent development model, he stated:

“Identifying high-ability students is not an easy business, especially as we move toward a more sophisticated, nuanced, and developmental approach to giftedness. The development of talent among students of uncommon ability requires more than

simply the assessment of general intellectual ability. And the ultimate success of gifted students in culturally valued domains will necessitate understanding the pathways to expertise and require the ongoing linkage of multidimensional assessment information and multi-tiered, multifaceted interventions. (p.7)”

The talent development model should transform high intellectual ability and potential talent in specific culturally valued domains into outstanding performance.

Another type of talent development model was described by Freeman (1998), advocating identification “through provision”, where pupils are self-selected to attend extra-curricular activities. This is similar to the Chinese model, described by Freeman, where staff are trained to provide special training for the ‘talented’ pupils within this provision, which she referred to as the Sports Model, as it mirrors the way that talent in sports is identified and nurtured. Like Birch (2004), Freeman sees the important step as the quality of provision that is then on offer for the ‘gifted’ child, as this is what develops talent, rather than the identification process itself, although it is helpful to place ‘gifted’ children with similarly ‘gifted’ children (Birch, 2004). This is potentially expensive given the extra-curricular nature of this model, and may exclude potentially ‘gifted’ children who are not able to stay after school for activities for whatever reason. However, I think the focus being on provision is a positive step forward for identification, rather than a reliance on tests. Another feature of this, and the models which rely less on rigorous testing, is that they include a larger group of pupils, thus targeting potential as well as those who have a proven achievement.

Whilst surveying the literature on identification, I have found myself focusing on how the different models could be used in schools. In my own previous primary school, where 70% of the pupils had English as an Additional Language, I was concerned about the bias against ethnic minorities of the g factor standardised test. Although I am persuaded that the g factor may play a part in ‘giftedness’, my experience with teacher identification tells me that it is very unreliable, and that teachers tend not to use the checklists or other prompts they have been given, as they are too unwieldy and they do not have time to use them properly. I was also aware of the unreliability of my school’s own identification, which uses a multiple sources of identification model, where several children did not achieve the higher levels they have been selected for

(although we identified a large group - around a third of the cohort); more worryingly, children who were not selected did manage to achieve these levels. I am therefore much more persuaded by talent development models, including Freeman's Sports Model (1998). I believe that the net should be cast very widely to ensure the best opportunity of capturing the underachieving 'gifted' child, although this does pose problems for subsequent teaching, where some children may struggle to keep up. It also confirms the need for teaching within the classroom to meet the needs of able pupils, as identification comes through provision.

Borland (2009) emphasised that 'giftedness' is a social construct, and that adherence to IQ tests is a major cause of under-representation of some groups in 'gifted and talented' cohorts. He also feared that some teachers' understanding of 'gifted and talented' matches that of the 'average American' (p.237), and that they are therefore not in the best position to identify that group. Lucas and Claxton (2010) asserted that "Put baldly: kids can get smarter and it's the school's job to help them" (p.177). This philosophy leads to a conclusion that all children benefit from provision that will expand their intelligence, and that appropriate provision will benefit all learners. Some such approaches are reviewed next.

Provision for 'Gifted and Talented' Learners

Thinking skills approaches

The last section showed the difficulties of identifying 'gifted and talented' pupils, and that, in my view, identifying through provision may be a more practical and fairer system for this. Indeed, provision should be the main focus as identification without appropriate provision is pointless. As VanTassel-Baska and Wood (2010) stated:

"As gifted education becomes more concerned about appropriate programs and services that can bolster achievement in schools for both gifted and other populations and less concerned about precise identification of who is gifted, the emphasis turns then to what works – what programmes and services are likely to produce the greatest learning for students? (p.345)"

'Gifted and talented' policies, from the Excellence in Cities (DfEE, 1999) to the National Strategy (DCSF, 2007), have not been prescriptive as to what or how 'gifted' students should be provided for, in contrast to the National Literacy and Mathematics Strategies (DfEE, 1998), which were detailed in how these subjects

should be taught. This may have left teachers without a structure for appropriate provision and also gave this policy a lower profile than the Literacy and Mathematics Strategies. In this section, some underpinnings to provision for ‘gifted and talented’ pupils outlined in the literature are explored.

Higher order thinking skills for teaching ‘gifted and talented’ students

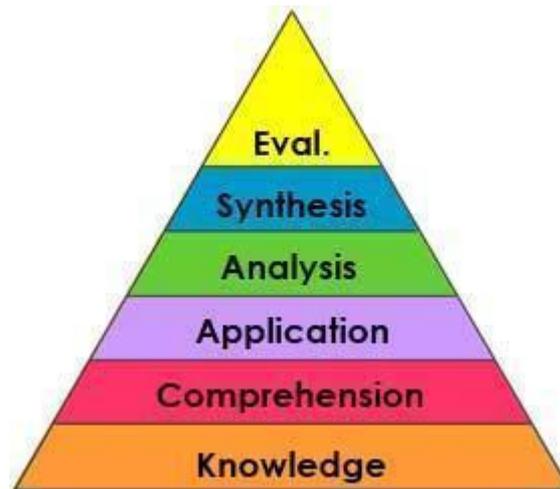


Figure 2.4 The original Bloom’s Taxonomy (Bloom, 1985)

A common theme in the literature for teaching ‘gifted and talented’ pupils is the suggestion that we should provide opportunities for higher order thinking in their work (Bloom1985; Wallace, 2001). Bloom (1985) is a standard reference text in this regard, having developed Bloom’s Taxonomy of higher order thinking. First developed in 1956, Fig 2.4 shows the taxonomy pictorially.

Bloom’s Taxonomy ranks processes required in learning in order of difficulty and complexity. At its simplest level, children receive knowledge and can recall it, next they would be able to comprehend it and that could lead to them being able to apply that knowledge. The higher orders of thinking are analysis; synthesis (creating one of your own); and evaluation. Using these three orders should be the particular focus for the ‘gifted and talented’ student. These higher order skills might apply equally to the arena of sport or the arts, where analysing and evaluating performances enable improvement of performance, as well as creating something new.



Remembering: can the student recall or remember the information?	Define, duplicate, list, memorize, recall, repeat, reproduce state
Understanding: can the student explain ideas or concepts?	Classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate, paraphrase.
Applying: can the student use the information in a new way?	Choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write.
Analyzing: can the student distinguish between the different parts?	Appraise, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, and test.
Evaluating: can the student justify a stand or decision?	Appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, evaluate.
Creating: can the student create new product or point of view?	Assemble, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, and write.

Figure 2.5 Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson, 1994)

The original Bloom's Taxonomy has been updated by Anderson, Lorin and Lauren (1994). Anderson et al's revised model is shown in figure 2.5. In Anderson et al's (1994) version, creating becomes the highest order as opposed to evaluating, and the orders of thinking are expressed as verbs, not nouns. Like the original taxonomy, it provides a framework for teachers to use when planning, to ensure challenge for the most able pupils, and is widely used. As a tool for differentiation, it allows teachers to teach the same subject, whilst slanting the focus to suit the abilities of individuals, or groups, in their class. It is simple to use, frequently requiring a different wording rather than a different task, which makes it convenient and quick for teachers to use in providing for the range of abilities they find in a mixed ability class.

A critical review of Bloom's Taxonomy

Whilst Bloom's Taxonomy is held in high regard in British educational practice, such as in the Gifted and Talented Leading Teachers' Handbook (DfES, 2007), and is widely accepted in the literature (e.g. Krathwohl, 2002; Gray and Waggoner, 2002) it is not without its critics. Booker (2007) argues that the taxonomy was developed for higher education, not for children at school. Wineburg and Schneider (2010) state that Bloom's Taxonomy appears to disregard the importance of knowledge (which Booker argues Bloom may not have intended, as he would have assumed by university standard that students would have had a good foundation of knowledge). Wineburg and Schneider, using the example of teaching history, argue that knowledge has great importance in learning, and is so important in aiding the critical thinking process, it should be at the top of the pyramid, rather than the bottom.

Madaus, Woods and Nuttall (1973), whilst broadly agreeing with the Taxonomy, could not find the same magnitude in the paths in the top two levels, and synthesis and evaluation may not be highly dependent on the lower levels. This does question whether there is strictly a taxonomy as such, and they suggest a Y shaped formation, rather than a pyramid, which is also highly dependent on the 'g' factor (described earlier in this chapter).

Some authors (e.g. Roberts, 1976) have also pointed out that whilst Bloom's Taxonomy has made a big impact on education policy, it has had less impact at classroom level, where teachers generally formulate questions and tasks using the lowest levels of the taxonomy. This could be due to a lack of training and expectation in schools, as it remains a cheap and effective tool for differentiation and structuring tasks for more able learners.

The TASC model

The TASC model (Thinking Actively in a Social Context) was devised by Wallace (2001), employing an eclectic approach. She proposed that the key to successful problem-solving was in the quality of reflection and consequent re-thinking as well as practising thinking skills and strategies. The programme focuses on metacognition, with

the child being taught how to reflect, consolidate and transfer their skills and strategies to new situations. The model illustrates stages involved in problem-solving.



Figure 2.6 The TASC wheel (Wallace 2001)

It is thought that by practising thinking using the TASC wheel, children will be trained to improve their problem-solving skills. The task used can be curriculum based or otherwise. The TASC wheel is more of a plan providing teachers with a way of looking at teaching thinking, than a programme.

There has not been a great deal of research to evaluate the effectiveness of TASC. Chandler (2005), in an anecdotal report, found it raised levels of achievement and self-esteem, whilst creating a positive learning environment. Wallace and Maker (2009) similarly found benefits from the approach in a range of areas –

- Motivation, independence and engagement,
- Self-esteem, enjoyment and success
- Diminished anti-social behaviour and increased socially acceptable behaviour.

In addition teachers reported improved academic scores as measured by outcomes in Year 6 SATs tests.

Whereas Bloom's Taxonomy is a useful tool in the provision within the classroom, the TASC wheel needs to be explicitly taught and practised. It has this in common with two other popular thinking skills training programmes, which are not explicitly designed for 'gifted and talented' pupils but are considered to be helpful to them – Philosophy for Children (Lipman, Sharp and Occanyon, 1980) and De Bono's Six Thinking Hats (1973). However, explicitly taught thinking skills will not necessarily cross into general use within the classroom, and may be used only in those lessons where they are being taught. In this respect Bloom's Taxonomy is a much more useful tool, as the teacher ensures the thinking skills element is planned in as a part of each lesson. Some attempts therefore have been made to incorporate thinking skills within curriculum areas, to help teachers to ensure their curriculum stretches their more able pupils. Examples of this can be seen in Cognitive Accelerated Approaches, where subject specific programmes have been devised with teaching of thinking skills incorporated within (e.g. Gazzard, 1993; Shayer and Adhami 2006).

Integrated Curriculum Based Approaches

The literature has outlined the challenges facing professionals who want to develop a curriculum (for example, Renzulli, 1988). Firstly, developing differentiated curricular material is difficult and demanding, involving more than "slapping together" (p.53) a few activities, as curricular principles need to be respected drawing on research of effective practice for the 'gifted and talented'. Secondly, drawing together a curriculum that focuses on thinking skills (Bloom, 1985), creativity (Renzulli, 1988, Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), advanced content (VanTassel-Baska and Wood, 2010), a cross-curricular approach and a blending of process and product. This all adds up to a great deal of effort.

Two possible models are outlined here, which adhere to the principles outlined by Renzulli (1988), although this is not a comprehensive survey of models that have been developed.

The Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM)

The Integrated Curriculum Model was created by VanTassel-Baska in 1986 (VanTassel-Baska and Wood, 2010). VanTassel-Baska has attempted to include both acceleration (teaching beyond the age-related curriculum) and enrichment (teaching in

greater depth) in this model, believing both are desirable features of the programme, when used in an integrative way. Identifying characteristics of ‘gifted’ learners as including precocity, intensity and complexity, their needs are addressed in both cognitive and affective domains. According to VanTassel-Baska, integrated approaches can work better than partial interventions as they embed higher order thinking into subject matter, teach concepts in a discipline and incorporate creativity within the need for strong subject knowledge. Three features of the programme are that it:

- Emphasises advanced content knowledge, honouring the talent-search concept, using careful diagnostic / prescriptive approaches
- Provides higher-order thinking and processing
- Organises learning experiences around major themes, to provide connections between learning

The ICM model has three dimensions, shown in figure 2.7., which are discussed in turn below.

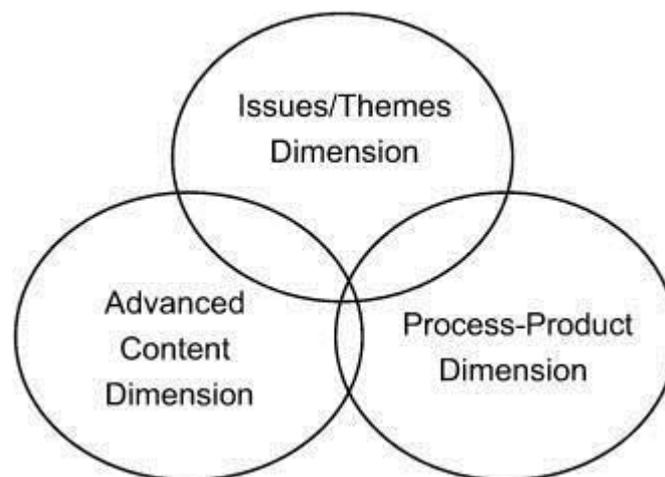


Figure 2.7 Dimensions of the ICM model (VanTassel-Baska, 1986)

1) Content Dimension

Acceleration is a key feature of the ICM model. There has been debate in education about the benefits of ability grouping and methods of doing this. Kulik and Kulik (1992) in a meta-analysis study of the effects of ability grouping concluded that multi-level classes which involve only minor amendments for different ability groups have little or no effect on student achievement, but programmes which make more substantial adjustment to ability, such as cross-grade teaching, have been shown to raise student achievement. Kulik and Kulik highlighted the difficulties for teachers in presenting different materials to three different ability groups, as this is inefficient, and

remains the weakness of within class differentiation. Programmes of enrichment and acceleration, which involve the greatest amount of curricular adjustment, have the largest effect on student learning. Their findings also did not support that lower ability groups were harmed academically or emotionally by these arrangements.

Rogers, in another meta-analytic study (2001), supported the findings of the Kulik and Kulik study (1992), in finding high ability students achieve higher levels in ability groups than in mixed ability groups. Additionally she found that breaking classes down into smaller groups for instruction produced higher academic effects for all students, rather than whole class instruction. According to Rogers, mixed ability groups help socialise the lower ability groups, but do not raise achievement for any ability group. She found slight gains for lower ability and middle ability students, when the programme is appropriately differentiated for them, but when differentiation could not be documented, the effects were zero. She also found that lower ability children do not do worse in ability groups, but develop more self-confidence in mixed ability groups. This evidence has implications for the organisation of teaching the most able within the classroom, which is an area being explored in this study, as these suggestions are counter to the way many teachers organise their classes in the UK, where mixed ability classes are standard, with whole class instruction a part of every lesson.

Using research evidence meta-analytic studies, VanTassel-Baska has incorporated ability grouping as part of the acceleration aspect of the model. Another part of the content dimension is the diagnostic-prescriptive approach, where pupils are assessed using materials chosen by that institution, and then given materials appropriate their level. This includes ‘curriculum compacting’ which entails defining the goals and outcomes, ascertaining which outcomes have been met already and providing replacement strategies by utilising instructional options that will enable a more challenging and productive use of the student’s time.

2) Process / Product dimension

The model places emphasis on learning investigatory skills that allow students to develop a high quality product. This involves an interactive model, with consultation and independent work as the mode of pedagogy. Thinking skills are addressed in this

dimension, mainly through inquiry-based learning where students construct knowledge for themselves.

3) Epistemological concept dimension

The concept based model is organised by themes and ideas, that cross domains and subject areas, which enables students to make connections across the curriculum, which enables understanding and embedding of learning.

VanTassel-Baska has researched the effectiveness of the ICM from a number of research projects, which indicate the effectiveness of the model, not only with ‘gifted’ learners, but all learners (VanTassel-Baska and Bracken, 2008). VanTassel-Baska and Wood (2010) conclude that the research evidence for the effectiveness is strong and convincing in each subject where it has been assessed.

As previously stated, provision for ‘gifted’ pupils was not specified in the National Strategy for Gifted Education (DfES, 2007), therefore schools have been left to find ways to meet the needs of their pupils. In the current study, one of the intended outcomes is to see how this provision matches up to researched models, and to find out how much knowledge practitioners have of ‘gifted’ education. How many of the ideas in the research on the subject are seen in the lessons, even if they are piecemeal and not as comprehensive as the ICM? The ICM provides, for me, a thorough and joined up approach to ‘gifted’ education – something to aspire to, although it may be difficult to achieve in a primary school in the UK.

The School-wide Enrichment Model (SEM)

Another integrated model, originally developed by Renzulli in 1976, the School-wide Enrichment Model (SEM) presented Renzulli’s attempts to incorporate research into ‘gifted and talented’ students, particularly the work of Sternberg (1985, 2000, 2002, 2004), into a model for provision. It focused on the aspect of his Three Ring Conception of Giftedness (described earlier in this chapter p.34), which he calls ‘creative-productive giftedness’, finding ways to provide appropriate learning situations to develop this strand of ‘giftedness’. The aim is to transform the learner from a ‘learner of lessons’ into a ‘first hand inquirer’ (p.142), which Renzulli stated, differentiates this programme from approaches which emphasise advanced content and problem-solving,

and the acquisition and storage and retrieval of information. Renzulli's goal was to provide a total school enrichment programme, making schools a place of talent development for all students (described earlier in this chapter p.45-46).

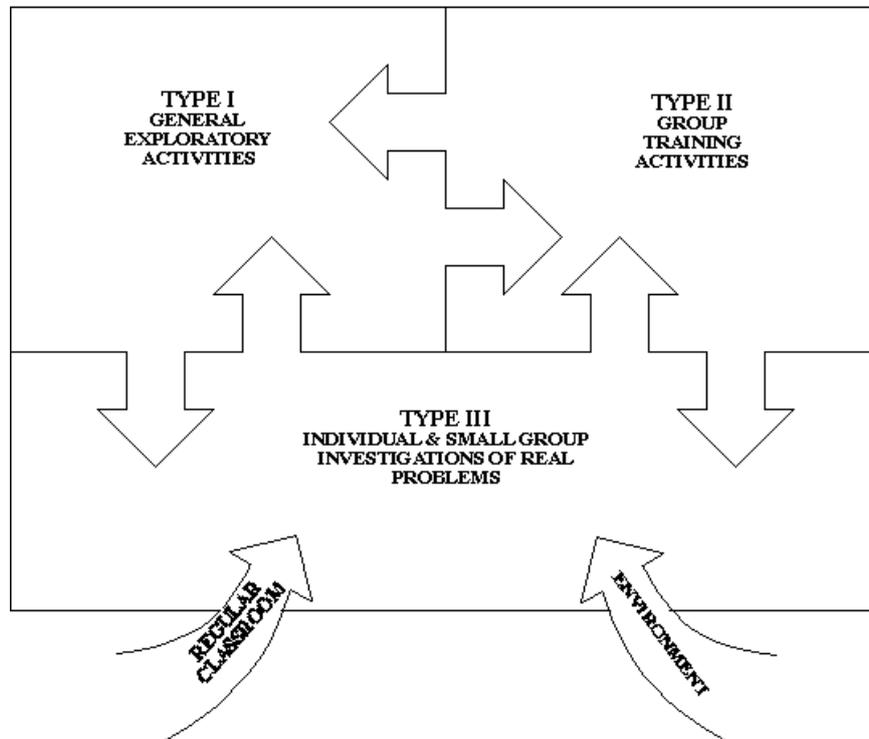


Figure 2.8 Enrichment Triad model (Renzulli, 1976)

The model avoids labelling, which has caused much controversy (Bonshek, 2002; House of Commons, 2010), and is discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Each student has a strength-oriented profile that documents both characteristics and achievements, interests and learning styles (the Total Talent Portfolio). Where students are two or more years above age related expected standards, provision is put in place, such as curriculum compacting, a more advanced maths group, special mentoring or enrolling on-line for a particular course.

The Enrichment Triad Model (fig 2.8) provides the theoretical and curricular basis for the SEM.

- Type I exposes the student to a wide variety of different stimuli that would not ordinarily be covered in the curriculum. This part of the model may be delivered

by outside speakers, arranging enrichment clusters, demonstrations or performances or by using a variety of multi-media resources.

- Type II includes materials to promote thinking and feeling processes. This includes creative thinking, critical thinking and problem solving, metacognition skills, skills in advanced level reference materials and written and oral skills.
- Type III involves students, who are interested, pursuing a self-selected area, assuming the role of the first-hand inquirer. Type III enrichment provides opportunities for applying interests, knowledge and creative tasks, and requires the task commitment to a complete a self-selected problem or area of study. This helps task commitment (an important aspect of his Three Ring Conception of Giftedness model).

In the School-wide Enrichment Model (fig 2.9), a talent pool of around 10-15% of above average ability / high potential students are identified using a variety of measures (such as described on pp. 39 - 47).

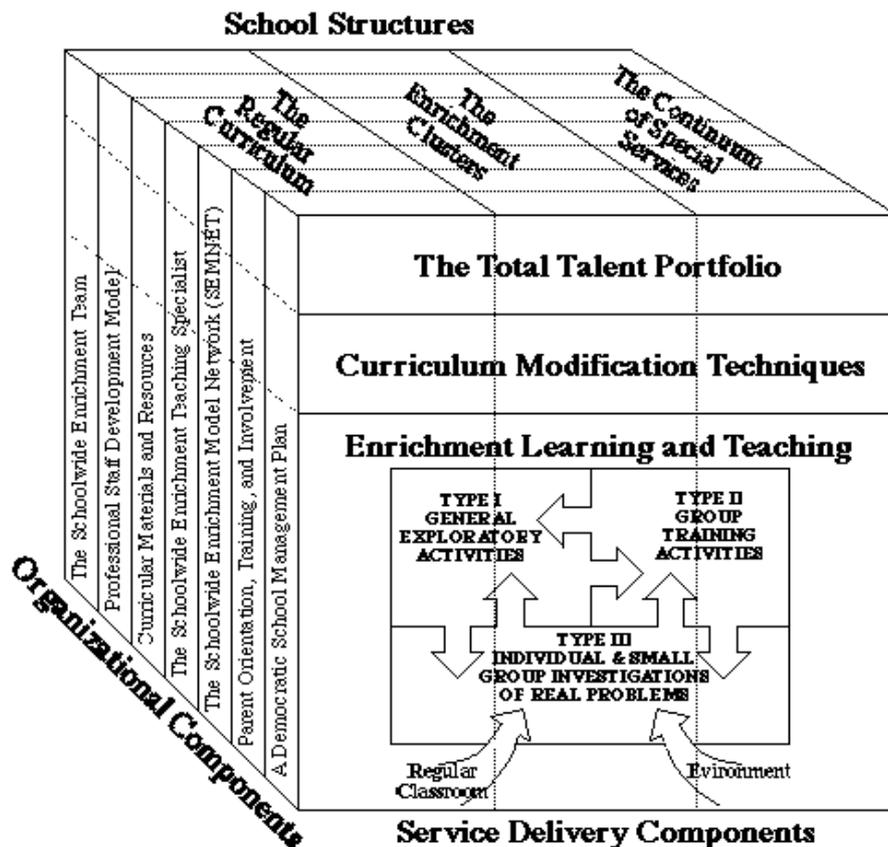


Figure 2.9 The School-wide Enrichment Model (SEM) (Renzulli, 1976)

They are then eligible for various services, such as interest and learning style assessments, using a variety of activities (e.g. projects, independent study, and computer-assisted education). The curriculum is differentiated and streamlined using curriculum compacting techniques and a series of enrichment activities are organised around the Enrichment Triad Model.

The goals of the programme are threefold:

- 1) To maintain and expand a continuum of special services that will challenge students with demonstrated superior performance in all aspects of the school programme
- 2) To infuse higher order learning in all aspects of the school's curricular and extra-curricular programmes, with extended opportunities in students' areas of particular interest
- 3) To preserve specialist personnel required necessary to carry out these goals.

Renzulli and Reis (1994) completed a meta-analytic study on the effectiveness of the SEM. Their findings broadly indicated that not only are there better outcomes for students in terms of product outcome and creativity and task commitment, but there were also positive changes in teachers' attitudes to 'gifted and talented' students and student self-concept. However, little difference was found in outcomes between students formally identified as 'gifted and talented' as opposed to those who were more able but had not been identified. This led Renzulli and Reis to question the wisdom of identifying students for programmes as is done in the more traditional programmes.

Renzulli (1998) wrote "A rising tide lifts all ships", and this describes how Renzulli (2010) views the School-wide Enrichment Model. What is good for 'gifted' children in terms of learning opportunities, is good for all children. This model does not require identification of a group, so also answers criticisms of elitism, which has been seen as a barrier to 'gifted education'. It requires whole school commitment and knowledge of how to address the needs of 'gifted' pupils, and the recruitment of specialist staff, where necessary, to deliver provision when the expertise is not available in school. Some of the provision in Type 1 could be said to have been covered by the Complementary Programme the Local Authority Adviser described in Chapter 3 but this present study aims to ascertain how far the school has met the aims of the other two types. How far

have theoretical models of empirically researched effective practice found their way into the daily practice in inner-city schools, for example?

Issues Raised by this Literature Review

When looking at the ‘gifted and talented’ policies (Chapter 1), it is noticeable that very little of the research outlined in this chapter seems to have been incorporated into the policies in the United Kingdom. Compared to the very detailed and prescriptive National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, which were introduced by a nationwide training programme which most teachers received, the Gifted and Talented Strategy (DfES, 2007) was vague and non-prescriptive, and training was only given to one member of the school staff (if that), whose job it was to disseminate their knowledge. The training focused mainly on identifying students, although this was done at school level, without the aid of psychologists. Bloom’s Taxonomy was the major tool of provision. Although the level of prescriptiveness of, for example, the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies (DfEE, 1998) may have been unhelpful given the apparent diversity in the ‘gifted and talented’ group, the lack of specific guidance appears to have left schools floundering and uncertain as to how to best make provision for this group of pupils.

I have outlined the dates of the inception of models such as Renzulli’s School-wide Enrichment Model (1976) and VanTassel-Baska’s Integrated Curriculum Model (1986), to show that rigorous models based on evidence-based studies were available at the time that all the ‘gifted and talented’ policies were developed, and yet were not used in the policies. It may have been thought that these models (both developed in the US where the ‘gifted’ programme is more developed and long-standing than in the UK) did not fit into the UK system. It may also be that the Government had changed their mind about making policies in such detail, but this would also have had the effect of not widely exposing teachers to information about well-regarded and empirically researched models.

I have focused, in the review of the literature, on looking at what theories of ‘gifted education’ tell us about how to approach provision for ‘gifted’ students. In this study, one aspect of interest will be how evidence-based research features in the way the school provides for their ‘gifted’ pupils. Is there a gap between the two? Table 2.0

below, shows how areas explored in this literature review are linked to the subsequent research questions, although the literature referred to in Chapters 1 and 3 have also contributed to the formulation of the questions.

Table 2.0 Relationship between areas of literature reviewed and research questions

Research Question	Areas of literature review giving rise to each question
1) To what extent have theoretical models of identification and provision for the 'gifted and talented' filtered into the policies within schools and consequently into classroom practice?	Definitions of 'gifted and talented' The nature of intelligence Identification of 'gifted and talented' students Provision for 'gifted and talented' learners
2) Has national policy on 'gifted and talented' education impacted on the practice of teachers in the school setting and if so, how is this demonstrated?	The nature of intelligence The identification of 'gifted and talented' students Provision for 'gifted and talented' learners
3) What are the attitudes of the staff in the school towards the identification of 'gifted and talented' pupils and making specific provision for them?	The nature of intelligence Identification of 'gifted and talented' students
4) Have there been challenges faced by the school in providing for this group of children, who were selected as a requirement of the policy?	Provision for 'gifted and talented' students

In this study, I look at how the policies have impacted on the implementation of the policy for 'gifted and talented' pupils, and to what extent teachers felt equipped to provide for this group. Using this to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy has been an opportunity to assess ways in which 'gifted and talented' education could be more effectively provided for, and whether statutory policy has been an effective means of achieving this. This is particularly relevant at this time, when there is no current 'gifted education' policy, although there is still a general consensus, especially through Ofsted, that this is an area of education that still needs addressing (Ofsted, 2013). The next chapter, the Institution Focused Study, explores the role of the Local Authority in implementation of the government 'gifted and talented' policy, which provides context for the main study.

CHAPTER 3: Institution Focused Study

Introduction

Following the outline of the background to ‘gifted and talented’ initiatives and policies in Chapter 1 and the extensive literature review presented in Chapter 2, this Institution Focused Study (IFS) provides a context and background more specific to the main research study. The institution I have chosen to study is the local authority, within which the Case Study school of the research study is located.

Rationale and Purpose

The reason the local authority was chosen as an institution suitable for the IFS, was because the National Strategy for ‘Gifted and Talented’ Education (DCSF, 2007) and previous initiatives for ‘gifted and talented’ pupils relied heavily on the role of the Local Authority (LA) Adviser (Dracup, 2003). As a conduit from Government level to school level, the local authorities held a key role in implementing these, as well as other policies, such as the national Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. The training for the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator (GATCO) in the selected school was provided by the LA Adviser, as was subsequent up-dating of policy initiatives and motivational support. The main research will address how successfully this has been done, in the view of the chosen school (introduced in Chapter 4), but this study will outline the perspective of the LA Adviser, and review her experience in trying to implement the range of strategies that have been in place since the inception of Excellence in Cities (DfEE, 1999) initiatives. This will provide a local context to the literature on the local authority role, making the focus more relevant to the main study. This focus also provides added depth to the main area of study.

The aims of the IFS, therefore, are to illuminate the link from policy to practice, as well as give context to the main research study. In order to demonstrate this, the duties of the LA Adviser were examined and some of the issues that have arisen from this have been explored. These duties have been placed in the context of the legal requirements of LAs for education, and also some of the political and financial pressures that face LAs. An important part of this IFS was to learn about the impact of these on the LA Adviser, trying to implement government strategy in her local

borough. In this respect, it is of wider interest to draw parallels with other advisers' experiences, especially those whose roles have been to deliver other government strategies, although the boundaries of this IFS are within the 'gifted and talented' education strategies in the borough chosen.

Whilst local authorities have had a key role in ensuring the success of the 'gifted and talented' initiative, much of the literature has focused on implementation at school level. There is a noticeable lack of research in this area. One reason for this has been the growing autonomy of schools, contrasting with the early 1990s (Audit Commission, 1998, DfE, 2010). An early report into educating able pupils (HMI, 1992), indicated the relevance of what were then known as local education authorities (LEAs). They noted the impact of provision at this level, through policies and guidelines as well as their enrichment materials and special activities. An interesting development observed at this stage (HMI, 1992), was the establishment of local support groups, which LEAs were ideally placed to organise. These embryonic beginnings were built on government initiatives over the previous decade (DfEE, 1999; DfES, 2007). However, in 1992 fewer than 10 per cent of LEAs had established provision for more able children (HMI, 1992), and very few had a designated person whose sole responsibility was for provision for the very able. That HMI report also identified that where an adviser had been allocated time to spearhead developments, more progress was made, and that this seemed to be a key factor in successful implementation of the policy. Therefore, despite the trend towards school autonomy, the local authority continued to play a major role in the implementation of 'gifted and talented' policy, and as such, requires attention.

This is a small scale exploratory study, but it is an attempt to begin to redress the lack of research in this area, whilst providing further illumination to the findings from the main Case Study. Background information on the role of the local authority is discussed, as well as other factors common to all local authority education advisers, to understand the opportunities and constraints the local authority operated under, during the time 'gifted and talented' policies were in existence.

Sources of Information

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology underpinning this study and the same philosophical stance and ethical principles apply to the IFS. Data came from two sources – interviews and documentation. The shortage of published research in this area has already been noted, and documentation on the role of the Local Authority Adviser’s role in this particular local authority was non-existent. Therefore sources of data other than documentation were required, which is why participants were sought to enrich the documentary information.

Interview data were gained from two sources - the Local Authority Gifted and Talented Adviser in the local authority of the Case Study school and a Director of Resources from a different local authority, as I was unable to gain access to the Director of Resources from this LA. This was not problematic however, as the information I required was not specific to the LA I was studying, but general to all LAs.

Interviewing the Local Authority Adviser, to some extent, addressed the lack of published literature about local authority practice in this field, as well as enabling me to link how policy has impacted on practice. It also gave an ‘insider’s view’ of the experience of an LA adviser. Data collection was through semi-structured interview. This method was chosen, because by structuring the interview somewhat, it focused on the relevant areas I was interested in, whilst still allowing the participant to explore the topics and discuss areas that I had not considered. During the interview, a number of issues that were present in the literature emerged, including the difficulties of identifying the cohort, teacher attitude to the policy and the difficulties that the term ‘gifted and talented’ had posed. In addition, the importance of the funding in creating both opportunities and obstacles was an important area which emerged. The Local Authority Adviser had worked in this position since 1999, when the ‘Excellence in Cities’ policy was first introduced. She had a wealth of experience in this area, and consequently had a key influence amongst other local authority advisers in the ‘gifted and talented’ field. The questions asked in the interview included how her role had changed over the years and the impact on her job, the obstacles she had faced and the opportunities the policies had given, the impact of variable funding and the activities

she introduced, how the work was evaluated, and her view of how the national provision assisted her in her work.

The second interview was with a Director of Resources as described, to assist my understanding of the organisation of local authority finances. This gave me up to date information about trends and policies in local authority financing. The Director of Resources has worked in the same outer London Borough for many years, again with a depth of experience and knowledge in local authority finance. Questions to him centred around the relative impact of ring-fenced funding on securing success in implementing education policy, and the likely impact of changes as a result of the (then) forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review (October 2010), following the General Election leading to a change of government.

The interview took place before the Comprehensive Spending Review of 2010 reported. Whilst he tried to anticipate the likely outcomes of this review, it is a reminder that any study involving political issues tends to be a 'snapshot' in time, and that, in this dynamic environment, changes take place constantly, and priorities and concerns change concurrently.

These interviews yielded a rich source of information, as well as the varying viewpoints of the participants. Analysis of the data was achieved by selecting themes that were evident in both the literature and the interviews, although as the participants spoke about different topics (given their different areas of expertise), they were not providing corroboration, or otherwise, with each other. In particular, quotations from the interviews are given as exemplars illustrating themes and ideas raised in the literature, which helps to achieve the previously stated aim of making links from policy to practice, as well as providing a context. Although the literature relates to nationwide issues, the focus and boundaries of this study relate to the specific local authority which is the context of the IFS and the main research study, and the interview with the Local Authority Adviser was invaluable in providing information about the local context.

The second source of data was published literature. Much of the information gathering has come from government reports and documents, although little of this relates to the Local Authority per se. These include policy documents such as Excellence in Cities (DfEE, 1999), evaluative documents, from various Ofsted reports (Ofsted, 2001; 2009) and Parliamentary Select Committee reports (House of Commons, 1999, 2010).

The Institution – the Local Authority

Background information about the institution is included here to provide a context to issues faced by this local authority. The institution is an inner London borough, and to protect the anonymity of the participants, it is referred to as Westford. Its population was 288,300 in 2011 (Office of National Statistics). These were the most up to date statistics available at the time of writing. Although there are some small pockets of affluence, the borough comprises mainly socially deprived areas. Fifty eight percent of the population is aged thirty five or under. This clearly has implications for planning education services. The population is increasing (up from 275,400 in 2007), due to an increasing birth rate rather than mobility.

In terms of ethnic minority groups, in 2011, 75% of Reception children came from black and minority ethnic groups. 11% of households had no English speaking member, and one hundred and twenty languages are spoken in the borough. The largest ethnic minority group is Africans, who constituted 12.9% of the population in 2011, although Latin Americans are the fastest growing group in Westford.

The Council itself is Labour Party controlled, the last election being (at the time of writing) in May 2014, and the second biggest party is the Liberal Democrats. The Council is divided into four departments, and education comes under the umbrella Children and Adults' Services. The council's budget in 2014-15 was £323 million, and 31% of the budget was spent on children's services. In the May 2015 General Election, all MPs in the Borough elected were Labour, with a long-standing Lib-Dem MP losing his seat.

The make-up of the schools in the LA of the Case Study school is constantly changing, but information accessed on the council website (January 2015) provides

the following information: There are 36 maintained primary schools, 6 primary academies, 24 voluntary aided or controlled primary schools and 5 free schools. In the secondary sector, there are 14 secondary academies and 3 secondary faith schools and 1 free school. In addition, there are 6 schools solely for pupils with special needs, and a further 7 mainstream schools offering specialist provision. In May 2010 (DfE, 2010), the then new government invited schools, deemed by Ofsted to be outstanding, to apply for academy status. In November 2010 it extended this to schools rated good with outstanding features, and this undoubtedly had an impact on the number of maintained schools, particularly in the primary sector, from then on. In addition to the state schools there are 10 independent schools in the borough, of which 3 are considered prestigious and attract pupils from all over London.

The borough is the 41st out of 326 most deprived local authorities in England (English Indices of Deprivation, 2010), and the twelfth most deprived in London. This is an improving picture – in 2004 it was 17th and 6th respectively. In terms of income deprivation, it is also an improving picture, at 25th most income deprived in England (from 15th in 2004), and is up from 6th most deprived to 7th most income deprived in London. In terms of unemployment deprivation, this is also improving at fourth place, down from second in 2007.

In summary, the borough is facing the same challenges as many inner-city boroughs, where high levels of deprivation and unemployment are coupled with a rising birth rate. In addition, as more schools seek Academy status (where schools receive money directly from the government rather than through the local authority), the local authority will have less money in their own pot to address the implications for education that these demographics suggest.

The Role of the Local Authority in implementing National Education Policy

This section explores issues particular to the local authority in this study, in relation to implementation of national education policies, before focusing on ‘gifted and talented’ initiatives. The role the LA plays in promoting national strategies and empowering schools is discussed and the obstacles they have encountered identified. It looks at the impact of the National Strategy (2007) and other ‘gifted and talented’

initiatives on Westford authority where the Case Study school is situated. The story may be different for different local authorities, particularly those that were not recipients of Excellence in Cities (DfEE, 1999) funding which only some authorities received until 2007, as described in Chapter 1, but common themes emerge from both the literature and interviews, such as the leverage this kind of targeted funding can give a government to ensure its policies are implemented, and reveals the impact of an ever-changing top-down policy approach by central government on a local authority, which very often is charged with enabling schools to convert policies into practice.

Although much of education policy is ‘national’ (i.e. English), and is set by the agenda of national government, there are many issues concerning the management of education that cannot practicably be managed at national level (Audit Commission, 1998). Also, there are a range of activities that cannot be handled by schools, such as planning provision for school places or auditing school performance. Thus there has been a need for a local tier to undertake these kinds of activities, carried out by local authorities.

However, the role of the local authority (LA) is a changing one (House of Commons Select Committee on Education and Employment, 1999), with schools gaining increasing independence from LAs. Over the past decade, through initiatives such as the Fair Funding regime (DfE, 2011), funding has been increasingly devolved to schools, the most recent example of this increasing independence has been the opportunity for schools in England to achieve ‘Academy’ status (DfE, 2010). The current trend towards encouraging schools to become academies has been supported by both the former Labour government and the current coalition government. However, amongst those who do believe LAs have an important role, there is a broad consensus that this role comprises four main components (Audit Commission, 1998). These are:

- 1) Articulating a vision, with a supporting strategy, for education in the area
- 2) Acting as a vehicle for improvement
- 3) Ensuring equity and an inclusive system of education
- 4) Managing trade-offs and dealing with the conflicts between the interests of different parties.

‘Gifted and talented’ education initiatives straddle all four of these components, as is highlighted in this IFS. The following are some of the ways I see the above components being realised within this policy.

- 1) Translating ‘gifted and talented’ policies into a reality for schools has been a key task for gifted and talented local authority co-ordinators. It is discussed subsequently how this role has provided advice, assistance and training courses for schools, as well as enrichment activities for children within their authorities. Pocklington, Fletcher-Campbell and Kendall (2002) noted that some local authorities have been very pro-active in urging head-teachers to embrace this strand of the ‘Excellence in Cities’ initiative.
- 2) A school which pays attention to the needs of the ‘gifted and talented’ students raises the achievement of all students (House of Commons Select Committee for Education and Employment, 1999, Renzulli, 1998). Improving the number of higher grades, such as the percentage of Level 5s at the end of Key Stage 2, when students are leaving primary school for secondary school, has been an increasing concern for schools in the borough and therefore the LA Adviser. This is a particular target for the Local Authority Adviser, who (referring to new government targets for pupils to achieve the higher level 5 in the Year 6 SATs tests) commented:

“Our level 5s are looking pretty grim – something like that might trigger me being offered to go into schools.”

- 3) Government papers in the last decade have emphasised the need for equity and inclusivity in the education system (e.g. DfEE, 1999; DCSF, 2003; DfES, 2004). Some writers (e.g. Bonshek, 2002; Haight, 2005) argued that the needs of ‘gifted and talented’ have been marginalised, with less importance placed on their needs than other groups of pupils. The Select Committee’s Third Report (House of Commons, 1999) is one of several national reports that state that ‘gifted and talented’ students have additional needs and that for too long it has been assumed that they will take care of themselves in the education system. Therefore part of the role of the Gifted and Talented Adviser in the local authority is to champion the

needs of the ‘gifted and talented’ students, and to ensure their needs are met in the spirit of equity and inclusion.

4) It is seen in this chapter, that the Westford Gifted and Talented Adviser had a restricted budget to manage and make decisions about how to distribute resources fairly, yet effectively. Some of these decisions are guided by government and local guidelines, but advisers needed to ensure that resources are not spread so thinly as to render the initiative ineffective.

The role of the Local Authority Adviser is a complex one. It is not merely “head office” (Audit Commission, 1998), but they must wear many hats, directing, advocating, judging. The adviser has to achieve the right level of balancing pressure and support. Since the 1998 Education Act introduced LMS (Local Management of Schools), the traditional relationship of the controlling local authorities and disempowered schools has been irrevocably altered (Audit Commission, 1998). A new balance has had to be found, which is best described as a partnership approach. This combines the objectives of empowering schools and a proactive LA. It is demanding, and has caused difficulties in its implementation as a result.

This is exemplified in the views of the Westford Adviser, when she speaks of how she tried to ensure policy is carried out whilst maintaining the partnerships approach:

“So it did happen with one primary and one secondary school, they were doing things like they didn’t have a leading teacher, or things weren’t happening that should have been happening. I did on one or two occasions threaten to withhold the money, but I never actually had to do it. Threatening to withhold money definitely has the desired effect.”

But also a more supportive relationship with some schools can be typified in the borough when the Westford Adviser said:

“For quite a few years now, if schools have asked me to come in or if there’s been some kind of issue about grades or something, then I’ve gone in.”

One of the ways that government policy ensured a role for local authorities in the ‘gifted and talented’ field, was the introduction of The National Strategy for Gifted and Talented Local Authority Quality Standards (LAQS, DCSF, 2007). These were

developed alongside IQS (Institutional Quality Standards, DCSF, 2007) for schools, and CQS (Classroom Quality Standards, DCSF, 2007). LAQS were founded upon the principle that effective support for ‘gifted and talented’ learners cannot be seen as the responsibility of a single professional or team within the LA, but that clear leadership and expertise in the field is required for effective development.

Together, all these tools were designed to provide coherent provision for ‘gifted and talented’ students, by providing a means to review, develop and support improvements in this area. Whilst use of these was not mandatory, it was indicative of what is expected of the local authority advisor by the government. Haight (2005) describes the effectiveness of local authority support as “bedding in” the initiative, by consolidating local partnership structures able to provide advice and continuity to schools.

Issues that emerged from the data

Eight main issues emerged from the documentation and interviews. The emerging issues are discussed, first focusing on available evaluations from the Select Committee (House of Commons, 2010) and the handful of published papers, followed by relevant comments and insights from the LA Adviser as they arise. The issues were:

- Funding
- The role of the local authority in accountability
- Evaluation of ‘gifted and talented’ initiatives
- The National Training Programme for Leading Teachers
- The use of the term ‘gifted and talented’
- Elitism
- Too many initiatives
- Extra-curricular provision vs classroom provision

Funding

The funding for education comes mainly from central government, although councils can top this up with money raised locally (as most did (BBC, 2004)). Whilst the centrally funded grants have been given in certain categories for specific purpose, in the main, the money is given for the general purpose of maintaining a school system delivering a national curriculum. However, if a government wants to promote a specific

policy, or address a specific issue, the usual way of achieving this is to provide additional funding. Typically, the money is provided for a short term, then withdrawn, when perhaps it is hoped that the policy is so well embedded that schools and local authorities will continue to finance it themselves. The Director of Resources pointed out that this was a policy of the previous government, which relied heavily on this approach. He said:

“The new government is un-ring-fencing most grants but it does not seem to be doing that in Education. Most commentators expect a similar pattern of specific grant funding for Education. It seems to me unlikely that Local Authorities are going to have the resources to pick up withdrawn grants other than from another government grant.”

The funding of ‘gifted and talented’ initiatives reflects this, with money provided initially through the ‘Excellence in Cities’ (DfEE1999; Dracup, 2003) initiative. At first this was only for secondary schools, but in 2000, primary schools were included.

In LAs not in receipt of ‘Excellence in Cities’ money, there was none earmarked for able pupils in the Standards Fund, and it was therefore up to schools whether to spend the money on such pupils (House of Commons Select Committee Third Report, 1999). However, Pocklington, Fletcher-Campbell and Kendall (2002) found that Gifted and Talented Co-ordinators in EiC schools found that success in achieving the aims of the ‘gifted and talented’ strand of Excellence in Cities was contingent upon additional resources, both financial and material. This would place all schools not deemed EiC schools at a greater disadvantage, in terms of focusing on the needs of this group of students.

The Westford Adviser recalled some secondary schools got large amounts of ring-fenced money, per annum about £35,000, and primary schools £10,000. However, this was targeted at the most deprived schools in the borough – all those schools with 35% or more on free school meals, often used as an indicator of social deprivation.

Westford devolved some of the money and retained some of it centrally to cover the Adviser’s salary, and run the Complementary Studies Programme, which gave pupils in the Excellence in Cities schools the opportunity to participate in centrally organised

enrichment activities. The fact that the money was ring-fenced ensured that ‘gifted and talented’ children received the intended input.

It was not only whole local authorities that did not receive any ring-fenced funding. Whilst money was generous for those that got it, many schools in Westford Borough did not receive any. At first only 13 schools were selected to be an Excellence in Cities school, although it was later rolled out to include more.

Funding through the Excellence in Cities initiative came to an end in 2007, when the National Strategy (DfES, 2007) was introduced. The Westford Schools’ Forum agreed to a central budget for gifted and talented using money from the Excellence in Cities purse, but when, in 2009, it was announced that the Strategy would come to an end in 2011, the Adviser’s role was ‘traded’, that is to say, schools had to pay for the services that were previously provided free of charge, in line with several other services offered by the LA.

The role of the Local Authority in accountability

Another theme that emerged from both the literature and the interviews was the extent to which the local authority has accountability both for the performance of its schools and for ensuring that schools adhere to government policy, what powers they have to secure conformity and also the motivators that encourage LAs to intervene in these matters.

LAs are judged on a “basket of indicators”, which should produce a “balanced scorecard” of performance (Audit Commission, 1998, p. 36). The indicators are a means of measurement, and are expressed in terms of a benchmark level of performance. Local Authority Advisers have a key role in ensuring benchmark targets are met, particularly as many of the local authority targets require improved performance from the schools under their jurisdiction. This put advisers under some pressure to deliver results against particular targets. For the Gifted and Talented Local Authority Adviser, this particularly related to improved grades among the more able pupils, which she saw as both a limiting factor and an opportunity.

The limitations of the role focus around the needs of different departments. Benchmark targets tend to focus on raising the lowest level of achievement – the number of pupils achieving Level 4 at Key Stage 2 and Level 2 at Key Stage 1. For example, the Local Authority Adviser said:

“The main thing about gifted and talented education, as far as I can see, is this major focus on league tables. All of that and just the focus of teaching to the test. Until that changes in some way, until the system of assessments are different, then you’re never going to get really good teaching for the more able.”

However, the need to account for the number of pupils achieving Level 5 has focused schools on needing strategies to achieve improvement in this area. The role of Ofsted has an impact at local authority as well as school level, and is seen as a vehicle to embed changes (Dracup, 2003). The Local Authority Adviser said:

“And schools on more than one occasion have said “We want to improve on our Level 5 maths or whatever, but we can’t get consultant time, because they are all busy”I can angle it always to them.”

A key role therefore in improving standards in local authorities, is to work with schools to help them meet the benchmark targets. This may be done on a voluntary arrangement, or with greater insistence on the part of the local authority. From the account of the Westford Adviser, it appears that local authorities are very motivated to meet their targets, and yet, in reality, there are few sanctions that can be imposed on a failing local authority. The Director of Resources notes:

“Government can threaten to embarrass them publicly, and careers of senior management could be threatened, but ultimately it is only through the ballot box that changes can be enforced. It would be possible to threaten the withdrawal of grants, but this is a rarely used sanction, as the effect would be likely to worsen performance.”

Evaluation of the ‘gifted and talented’ initiatives

Evaluations at national level

Given the amount of money that emerged to have been spent on ‘gifted and talented’ initiatives, a major issue is how successful the interventions have been, and whether the money invested has been well spent. The next part of this chapter explores the ways in

which programmes have been evaluated, and the outcomes that have arisen from this, before relating this to the role of the Local Authority Adviser.

A comprehensive evaluation of the Excellence in Cities ‘gifted and talented’ strand and the National Strategy has proved somewhat inconclusive. In the Parliamentary Select Committee Report (House of Commons, 2010), the issue of the “paucity of research” (Evidence 4, known as Ev 4) is referred to frequently, although this view does not have universal agreement. One witness even stated:

“We should stop having these initiatives, stop spending money, stand back and reflect.....What do we want for the future? (Ev 4)”

Whilst individual aspects of the initiatives were evaluated, (Deborah Eyre as a witness at the 2010 Select Committee describes the National Academy as being “endlessly evaluated” Ev 4), the situation regarding longitudinal research and the overall impact of gifted and talented education is more confusing. This is partly due to what was described in the Select Committee, as an “inconsistent and incoherent” programme (Ev 2). Also there was confusion as to whether there was a longitudinal study, which the National Academy believed they were conducting before their contract ended, but which government ministers did not see as a single study.

But there are difficulties in conducting a longitudinal study on the effectiveness of ‘gifted and talented’ initiatives, neatly summarised by the Westford Adviser:

“Children over the course of time in primary school and going into secondary school will get quite a series of experiences, but how do you prove that it’s had a particular impact? It’s very difficult. A lot of things could cause that.”

Also, because the bulk of the policy finished at 16 years of age, Westford did not have records of university destinations. For this reason, Westford has focused their monitoring and evaluative activities on evaluating each course run and monitoring school provision each year. The Adviser recognised that measuring the longer term impact is more difficult. The data is mainly of a qualitative nature:

“The qualitative gives you the best stories really. I mean you can make data tell you all kinds of things.”

However, more complex research into the success of the provision would probably require skills that are beyond local authority advisers, who generally have little experience in research. The government, on the other hand, needs information about the effectiveness of the policy, and whether or not it provides value for money. Therefore, there have been various attempts at national level evaluations of aspects of the programme, including those from Ofsted.

Ofsted (2001) focused mainly on how schools provided for their most able pupils, but little reference is made to the local authority role. However, the point was made by Ofsted that the lead co-ordinators (that is, the local authority advisers) in the Excellence in Cities partnerships had received well-defined training, but the training for school level co-ordinators had been less systematic, with more reliance on “learning on the job” (p.35) and informal support from the cluster. These clusters were set up under the Excellence in Cities (DfEE, 1999) guidance, and comprised three to eight schools, developing a network of external partnerships with other organisations, such as universities independent schools, museums or libraries. The Westford Adviser was able to support the cluster in the development of this.

Another finding by Ofsted (2001) was that summer schools organised and run by the local authority were, in general, more effective than those run by schools and, in some cases, outside providers, although the monitoring of the summer schools was found to be patchy at this stage.

“There was widespread uncertainty about how to ensure that information about progress made, skills acquired or newly identified would be fed back to the pupils’ schools in a coherent and recognisable form” (Ofsted, 2001 p.37)

The report concluded that many schools needed to improve developing practice for high ability pupils and that the local authorities had the experience to support them in this. Since then, the Teacher Standards (DfE, 2011) have been brought in, one standard of which is:

‘set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions’

However, subsequent Ofsted Reports (2009; 2013) and the Sutton Trust Report (Smithers and Robinson, 2012) showed that there is still an issue with schools

meeting the needs of their most able pupils. It seems the LA was needed to maintain the momentum in schools in creating arrangements for ‘gifted and talented’ pupils.

An ‘Excellence in Cities’ report (Pocklington, Fletcher-Campbell and Kendall, 2002) used views of participants of the initiative to evaluate its progress, outlining issues and challenges for the future. The focus was the views of the schools involved, and again little reference is made to the local authorities’ role in the success of the programme. It was noted that some of the headteachers had mentioned that the local authority had been enthusiastic about the initiative, and “urged headteachers to embrace the strand” (p.5), indicating that local authorities had been a driving force in getting the initiative off the ground.

At that stage, in 2002, the main developments from the Gifted and Talented Strand were seen as having drawn attention to ‘gifted and talented’ pupils and their needs, having introduced dedicated funding, introducing more extensive and diversified activities, and having increased staff awareness and understanding. Considering the early stage of the initiative of this report, it seems a lot was achieved relatively early on, although, at school level, evaluation of the programme showed considerable variation, and only a handful of schools “stood out for its rigour and thoroughness” (p.42).

Many of the schools made their own decisions about how to spend what were quite large amounts of money. In some cases, this was neither strategic, nor in the view of schools, very effectively spent, although some schools had more rigorous practices based on a number of objective criteria (Pocklington, Fletcher-Campbell and Kendall, 2002). There is no reference to the local authority advising schools on how to make decisions on spending the money, in order to meet the aims of the initiative, even though at the beginning of the initiative expertise and knowledge within the schools was at a very low level. However, in general, it was felt that the funding had been spent wisely, and teachers liked the flexibility as to how it was spent.

In terms of LA support for 26 schools they identified as failing to develop their provision for ‘gifted and talented’ pupils sufficiently, the report stated that there had been little scrutiny of school provision by the School Improvement Partners, although, with the help of the LA co-ordinators, several schools had established good links and

collaborations with other local schools, enhancing provision. Recognising the importance of the local authority role, it recommended that the local authorities should hold schools more rigorously to account, for the impact of ‘gifted and talented’ provision, encourage best practice, locally and regionally, by sharing directly with schools what works well, and helping schools to establish clearer indicators of what ‘gifted and talented’ pupils at different ages should be achieving.

Evaluation about the Local Authority Adviser’s role in implementing ‘gifted and talented’ policy

So what do these various attempts to evaluate ‘gifted and talented’ initiatives tell us about the effectiveness of local authority advisers? Firstly, the focus of evaluations is mainly directed at schools, with very little mention of the local authority, although when they are mentioned, it is often in terms of their effectiveness and expertise. This may mean that their role has been under-valued by policy makers. They have a key role in effective provision within schools, both in strategic terms and in the management of resources. This has implications now that these posts are no longer directly funded, yet in 1999, the Select Committee decreed that at a local level, every LEA should appoint an adviser, at a senior level, with responsibility for highly able children, recognising the importance of their role in ensuring successful provision.

The question that remains is, can the policy continue to thrive 12 years on, without this key role? At the Select Committee (House of Commons, 2010) Diana Johnson MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at that time for Schools in the DCSF, declared the government’s position, when she said, “We believe that support for gifted and talented pupils should be school-led” (Ev 19). From the Five Year Strategy (DfES, 2006), the government have emphasised the need for “personalised learning” (echoing the Ofsted Report, 2009), and this is how the needs of ‘gifted and talented’ pupils will now be met. She states that the “pupil guarantee” (DCSF, 2010), in which the government had set out a comprehensive picture of what every child and parent can expect from their school, to which they added new entitlements to move forward with personalised learning.

It seems that the present coalition government planned to leave the provision for this group of pupils in the hands of the schools, even though the evaluations have

repeatedly shown their ability to meet this challenge varies. In addition, non-EiC schools only benefited from two years under the umbrella of the National Strategy, and were only ‘having to’ make provision for the first time, before its demise was announced effectively lowering its priority considerably. These schools will have considerably less expertise than the schools and authorities who benefitted from EiC money. As Graham Stuart MP, a member of the Select Committee (2010) explained:

“That’s back to ’99 isn’t it? It was all embedded in schools then. The whole reason why the Government changed the policy was because this committee and others found that, if left to schools, insufficient attention was paid to it.” (Ev 23)

In terms of transition arrangements, discussed in the Select Committee, the materials produced for the Strategy will still be available, and that policy is now focused on every child’s progression, by getting a system of accountability in place. This seems to be a clear indication that the strategy is less concerned with support, and more on accountability and consequences for failing to comply.

For the Westford Adviser, this accountability gave her some hope that schools would see the value of her role, and buy in her services when the post is no longer centrally funded. She saw a void in the absence of the strategies, however, when she said:

“I think the mistake the strategies made was that they were too rigid. And a lot of people, again the good teachers who had the confidence to break away from the mould, but a lot of the young teachers have been taught through the strategies and are very narrow in their focus. So I don’t think that side of things will be lost to education. On the other hand, they did provide focus and a bit of power really.”

Despite the strategy coming to an end, Ofsted still require schools to make provision for ‘gifted and talented’ pupils (Education Committee, 2011; G&T Update, 2011), and so schools need to ensure they have the knowledge and skills within the staff team to deliver this. The Select Committee (House of Commons, 2010) heard that Ofsted needed to be stronger, in order to increase accountability for ‘gifted and talented’ provision. In the view of the witness Professor Stannard, National Champion of Gifted and Talented Learners, Ofsted needs a clearer framework from the Department, and more guidance about funding and how it should be allocated in

schools, so it appears there are doubts in some quarters as to the ability of Ofsted to hold schools to the accountability expected of them (Ev 30).

An issue for the Westford Advisor is that even if schools bought in her services, the national training for leading teachers is no longer funded, and local authorities have to consider whether they can continue to provide the high level of training for co-ordinators that has been available over the last decade. Enrichment activities now have to be self-funding, which may lead to cutbacks.

The National Training Programme for Leading Teachers

One of the principle ways of disseminating training for school gifted and talented co-ordinators was the National Programme for Leading Teachers in Gifted and Talented Education. In the Select Committee Report (House of Commons, 2010) it was reported (Ev 12) that a local authority's adviser said that the Leading Teachers for Gifted and Talented Training was a factor that strengthened her role.

The government strategy was to train lead teachers who would then cascade the training within the school setting. It is difficult to know from the Westford Adviser's enthusiasm whether she was pleased with the outcome of the training for the co-ordinators, or whether she was involved with how well the training was disseminated in school. This training was highly prized by the Westford Gifted and Talented Adviser, who said:

"Then when the strategy took over, we had this big fuss for one year about the leading teacher training programme. You were expected to train a leading teacher in two half days, which I thought was pretty incredible. Compare that with the five days training we've had. We did the four days, then obviously continued with the four day course as well."

The use of the term 'gifted and talented'

Excellence in Schools (DfEE, 1997) stated that schools often fail to stretch the most able and that the challenge for schools is to ensure all children develop their abilities, whatever they are. It identified the need for 'gifted and talented' children to be provided for properly in schools. Excellence in Cities (DfEE1999) continued to use the term, widely used in the literature at the time internationally (Renzulli, 1986; Sheffield, 1994).

The idea was to make the policy inclusive, “aspiring to achieving the dual notions of equity and excellence for all pupils” (Lowe, 2003, p.122). However there were tensions with the inclusivity model, not least that ‘gifted’ means exceptional talent to many people, not something that can be contrived into a percentage of any cohort.

Bonshek (2002) has made the point that socially deprived children are generally underperforming in schools in the United Kingdom, and therefore the marginalisation of ‘gifted and talented’ pupils in schools would have doubly affected their outcomes. She drew on the work of Bourdieu (1973) in her explanation of the phenomenon of underperformance. Bourdieu discussed the notion of cultural capital, which broadly refers to the summary of the experiences the child brings to school, based on their home and own cultural experiences. In the school system, the values most favoured are those of the middle class, and middle class pupils find it easier to participate in the system and be valued, as they share the cultural capital of the school and teachers. However, a child from a different class or ethnic group will have the opposite experience and therefore, Bonshek argued, such measures as identifying able pupils in all schools by percentage is an important tool in raising teachers’ awareness of their needs and abilities.

However, whilst the inclusivity of the policy is commendable, the terminology used tended to create a resistance among the professionals being asked to take the initiative on board. The Select Committee Report (House of Commons, 2010) reported one witness stating that many teachers are not “confident about the G&T word.” (Ev 5). Freeman (1998) described her objections to the term, in that the word ‘gifted’ implies gifts bestowed intact from on high, and has connotations too of personality and emotional issues. Like many writers she did not use the term, preferring ‘very able’. Likewise, the Select Committee (1999) adopted the term ‘highly able’ and justified this by saying that the DfEE (as the government department for education was named at the time) used the term ‘gifted and talented’ synonymously with a range of terms from very able to exceptionally able. The term ‘highly able’ more closely describes the group under discussion. Balchin (2009) stated that prior to the Excellence in Cities (DfES, 1999) initiative, the usual term used for this group was ‘very able’, and comments that the reasons for changing the term have “not been made easily

available” and that “it would be very useful to find out why the new terminology was put in place” (p.50). Equally, Koshy, Pinheiro-Torres and Portman-Smith (2010) noted that they had not found much change in practitioners' attitudes to the term ‘gifted and talented’ since an earlier survey (Thomas, Casey and Koshy, 1996). They found that 62% of teachers felt uncomfortable labelling children as ‘gifted’, preferring the term ‘more able’.

These views were echoed by the Westford Adviser, who found that terminology was a great barrier, particularly in the earlier stages of the initiative. She said:

“Terminology was a big issue right from the start. Always has been – the use of the word gifted. Apparently lots of advice to the DCSF not to use that term in the first instance, from a lot of people. They didn’t take the advice and so it’s caused a lot of problems, because people think of gifted as being a very small percentage, you know, that you might see once in a lifetime.”

Not much has been written about ‘gifted and talented’ education without reference to this terminology (e.g. Bonshek, 2005; Radnor, Koshy and Taylor, 2007). This reflects the ambiguity inherent in the term, and the connotations associated with it, which have contributed to resistance to teachers embracing the policy, and this has formed a barrier which the Westford Adviser has had to address in order to ensure the initiative was successful. She pointed out:

“Part of the battle in those days was getting people to understand that it wasn’t about that but about the more able in their schools. That was a hindrance without a doubt.”

Elitism

Much has been written about teacher attitude to ‘gifted and talented’ policy. Lowe (2003) discusses the perceived tensions between notions of “equity” and “excellence” and how these continue to be debated. The tension between “equity” and “excellence” is not just a feature of the British educational system. Rotigel (2003) reported similar attitudes in the United States, where programmes for the ‘gifted and talented’ child are also seen as elitist on the grounds that “the gifted and talented child already has so much” (p. 211).

Young and Tyre (1992) state that in a society which likes to think of itself as democratic, where everyone enjoys equal opportunities, anything associated with elitism is suspect. However, they warn that “the concept of levelling downwards” (p. 29) is as unacceptable as promoting privilege, believing in meeting the needs of all children.

Radnor, Koshy and Taylor (2007) also raised the issue of teacher attitudes, when they looked at how students were selected for the Urban Scholars Programme (an interventionist programme from nine participating London local authorities linked to Brunel University). They found that the participants, who were gifted and talented co-ordinators at schools involved in the programme, were ambivalent about selecting children for extra resources, as this did not fit with their own educational philosophies. In addition they had concerns about the identification of ‘gifted and talented’ students, who did not reflect the social and ethnic mix of their school populations.

The gifted and talented co-ordinators’ concerns about the ‘gifted and talented’ cohort not reflecting the ethnic mix of their school populations seem to be justified by research (DCSF, 2009). A witness to the Select Committee (House of Commons, 2010) reported that work done by Ofsted in late 2009 showed a disproportionate number of wealthier pupils in ‘gifted and talented’ cohorts in inner-city areas, despite more sophisticated methods of identification. They also identified a culture of “it’s not cool to be bright” as a factor (Ev 8). The issue of access throughout the education system for more able pupils from socially deprived backgrounds was echoed by Koshy and Casey (2008), who reported that despite the high increase of students in higher education over the past two decades, this is mainly due to students from wealthier backgrounds going to university, rather than benefiting working class students.

Ofsted (2001) identified some of the obstacles to identifying more ‘gifted and talented’ pupils from socially deprived backgrounds. These include poor levels of literacy and oral communication, and a lack of interest on the part of the pupil to show what they can do. An issue for schools is that they wish to be inclusive, but their use

of data, particularly in interrogating it well, prevents them from identifying the steps they need to take to achieve this.

Bonshek's work (2002) on the reluctance of teachers to recognise ability in pupils from socially deprived backgrounds has already been discussed. The policy of identifying a certain proportion from every school demonstrates that the government is promoting a relative definition of 'gifted and talented', where schools are to provide for the top 5-10% most able pupils, even if they do not compare as equal ability to the top 5-10% of pupils from another school. It was hoped that this would address some of the issues of inherent inequality.

Another way elitism was addressed was the requirement of inclusion in schools' 'gifted and talented' registers of a quota for 'talented' pupils. In Gardner's (1983) multiple intelligences (discussed in Chapter 2, p31), importance is given to pupils with aptitudes other than excelling in academic work, such as art or sporting talent. However, the requirement to identify a smaller proportion of 'talented' pupils than 'gifted' perhaps does not redress the notion of elitism as much as it could.

Furthermore, the evaluation of the National Academy (DCSF, 2009) pointed out that it had provided relatively little for the 'talented' cohort. Given that part of the role of the National Academy was to lead the country on the provision for 'gifted and talented' pupils, this could have the knock-on effect of lack of provision being replicated all over the country.

In Westford Authority, some of the issues with teacher attitudes were more focus on the less able and floor targets, and not thinking about the more able. The Adviser believed that attitudes had changed in both schools and parents over the course of the initiative, but not enough. She commented:

"The biggest impact right from the start was changing people's attitudes, which was, instead of thinking only about the less able or thinking about floor targets, they had to think about the more able. That battle has not been totally won, but I do think attitudes from schools and parents have changed quite dramatically."

This echoed a witness at the Select Committee (House of Commons, 2010) who reported:

“The sooner gifted and talented stops being seen as an elitist issue and starts being seen as an equal opportunities issue the better”.(Ev.2)

Too many initiatives

The Select Committee Report (House of Commons, 2010) identified too many initiatives as an obstacle to the smooth delivery of ‘gifted and talented’ education. One of the witnesses summed up her views that there were good intentions, but too many programmes and initiatives, with a lack of ideological and philosophical underpinning and research behind them. Another witness referred to the policy and “incoherent and inconsistent” (Ev 2). In her view, there are too many stakeholders who are either not working together, or working in opposition to one another. According to a witness, future funding should be designed to provide greater alignment of organisations, to bring it together, rather than to create something new. There is a frustration too that initiatives are not in existence long enough to ensure their success. She protested:

“Just as you start to get things right, they seem to disappear, but there you go.”(Ev 10)

The Westford Adviser reflects this in her comments about the demise of London Gifted and Talented, when she said:

“London Gifted and Talented was dreadful for the first few years, until they got a new lead. But then it was transformed .and was running really successfully, but as soon as it was running really successfully, it was stopped. That’s what happens – there’s no continuity.....We just need – whatever government is in we just need a period where things are allowed to consolidate.”

In addition to initiatives within the ‘gifted and talented’ arena, there was also competition with other initiatives, an issue addressed also by Ball, MacGuire and Braun (2012). The Select Committee (House of Commons, 2010) heard that there were too many things going on, and that is why things had gone off the boil. For the classroom teacher, there is a continual bombardment from the Government of initiatives encompassing a whole range of areas. As the Westford Adviser put it:

“I go into a staff meeting, and they do PMI the next day. The next week, they have another staff meeting about safeguarding, and they forget all about G&T.”

Extra-curricular provision vs classroom provision

One of the benefits that ring-fenced funding brought was the creation of a variety of enrichment projects, specially designed for ‘gifted and talented’ pupils. Such funding was not provided, of course, with the National Strategy, and so in-class teaching became more the focus of provision, looking at appropriate differentiation.

Rotigel (2003) made the point that every child has the right to learn something new every day in school, and the classroom is where they spend most of their time. They should not need extra activities to achieve this. The DCSF Report on the National Academy (2009) also notes the importance of securing high quality core education in the classroom, in what they call the “English Model”, enabling all teachers to access the training and support to enable them to teach the ‘gifted and talented’ effectively. Equally the National Strategy documents (DCSF, 2009) emphasised quality first teaching and provision being seen in the context of personalised learning.

In its report Ofsted (2003) found that, in almost all schools visited, the initiative had increased the number of extension and enrichment activities for pupils who would not otherwise have had access to these opportunities, and that it had a positive effect on achievement. However, they found that the critical issue for most schools was how to embed strategies for developing ‘gifted and talented’ pupils more firmly in the mainstream curriculum. The Westford Adviser reflected this position, when she pointed out:

“One of the disadvantages [of Excellence in Cities] was that in the early days, people saw it as a sort of add-on thing. Because we had such a big programme of enrichment and extension, people saw that as what it was all about, whereas that’s never been the case. Right from the start, a large part of my job has been looking at what is happening in the classroom. But people never seemed to fix on that, not even at local authority [level].”

Because the central focus of the National Strategy was teaching and learning, it helped to break down the previous assumptions associated with ‘gifted and talented’

provision. However, Kerry and Kerry (1999) pointed out that many teachers received too little guidance on differentiation, and that it often lacked context. They believed that teachers needed to adapt methods of differentiation using their professional skills. Leading teachers, who received the National Training Programme for Leading Teachers in this local authority, had the skills to do this effectively for ‘gifted and talented’ pupils, but it was unlikely that they managed to cascade this effectively to all the teachers in their schools.

However, is differentiation sufficient? Enrichment can of course take the form of programmes in school, as well as activities that are borough wide. Clearly the borough-wide (or even further afield) opportunities allow selected pupils to mix with children of similar levels of ability and interest, which could not always be provided within the school, particularly at primary level. However, a school-wide enrichment model is feasible within a tight budget, and could focus on the needs of ‘gifted and talented’ pupils, discussed further in Chapter 2.

Eyre (2001) discussed the pros and cons of classroom based against separate provision for pupils. Whilst reiterating the point that all children need appropriate provision within the classroom, there were advantages to targeted enrichment activities. These included offering activities that were unsuitable for the majority of children, being able to accelerate pace and complexity, giving the opportunity to work with their intellectual peers and reducing feelings of intellectual isolation. However, it is difficult to identify all the children who may benefit from these opportunities as continuity of provision is difficult and expensive to provide, and educational benefits only occur if sessions are well-planned and linked to other learning. Haight (2005) agreed with the need for inclusion in the initiative, pointing to the lack of a failsafe methods for accurate identification (discussed in detail in Chapter 2) as a major justification for the move away from withdrawal as a means of provision.

However Huxtable (2003) maintained that whilst good curriculum teaching is an essential component of provision to meet the needs of able pupils, it does not fulfil all their needs. Huxtable argued that extracurricular learning opportunities in a variety of venues help children to gain competence, confidence and motivation in order to become what she describes as “elasticated learners” (p. 140). This term incorporated

the concepts of flexibility and ability to increase capacity – high ability learners who are willing and able to benefit from learning experiences. In Huxtable’s view, a school-based approach would be insufficient to meet the needs of ‘gifted and talented’ learners. She stated that in order to widen a child’s base of confidence and competence, the experiences must go beyond the immediate vicinity of school and neighbourhood. The Westford Adviser described taking a group of children to Wisley Horticultural Gardens and seeing their reaction, illustrating why this is important. To Huxtable, the local authority’s level of provision should aim to add an extra dimension to school provision, acting as a bridge from the school to the world. Huxtable was critical of local authority provision which is seen as disjointed – there was usually little underpinning rationale as to what form the provision should take, identifying shortfalls and where to focus development. The Westford Adviser illustrated Huxtable’s views when she commented:

“Yes. It is off the curriculum, although one hopes it would have links to the curriculum.”

The Select Committee (House of Commons, 2010) reported similar views, when it stated that there was a need for integrated provision, and that there were certain challenges that cannot be provided in school. It was said that it is not realistic to ask schools to carry the whole burden, because if they did, there would be no outstanding performers. The truly ‘gifted’ (i.e. pupils who are exceptionally ahead of their peers in their domain) need appropriately expert help.

Ofsted (2009) found that masterclasses for ‘gifted and talented’ were above average in quality and of a more appropriate pace, as was teaching in the summer schools, which generated excitement among pupils, combined with opportunities to explore new ideas, develop new techniques and acquire knowledge. In other words, activities aimed specifically at ‘gifted and talented’ pupils tended to be more successful at engaging them and providing the learning experiences they need.

Conclusion

In researching the role of the Local Authority Adviser in implementing the national initiatives for ‘gifted and talented’ education, a “chequered history” has been uncovered, as described by the Chair of the Select Committee (House of Commons,

2010, Ev.19). The evidence shows that there have been too many initiatives, with too many stakeholders, resulting in what Eyre described as “incoherent and inconsistent” approaches (House of Commons, 2010, Ev 2). In addition, there has been confusion and gaps in the evaluation of the work that has been done, ostensibly leaving an unclear picture of the long-term impact of programmes for the ‘gifted and talented’.

Policy has been driven from central government through the local authorities to be implemented in schools. It has been the role of local authority advisers to make sense of these contradictions and form a coherent policy for their local authority. In the case of Westford Local Authority, this was facilitated by the provision of ring-fenced funding through Excellence in Cities and a subsequent commitment until April 2011 to fund her post, and some Complementary Studies programmes after this ended. However, from April 2011, this post was to be self-funded, through trading for her services. Her hope was that the remaining pressure on schools to buy in her services would be from the demands of Ofsted, who currently are expected to report on provision for ‘gifted and talented’ in schools. This is also the view of Professor Stannard, National Champion of Gifted and Talented Learners, as given to the Select Committee (2010):

“That means it needs more accountability around it; it needs Ofsted to be stronger; it needs a clearer framework of requirements from the Department to come straight down to schools, so they are not in any doubt about it;” (Ev30)

The government position, at present, is that schools will now provide for ‘gifted and talented’ pupils. The Parliamentary Under-secretary of State (House of Commons, 2010) told the Select Committee that the government believed that support for ‘gifted and talented’ pupils should now be school-led. The Five-Year Strategy (DfES, 2006) incorporating the policy of Personalised Learning (DfES, 2004-09) had led the Government to believe that the interests of ‘gifted and talented’ pupils can be served through the implementation of this policy. However, comments from the Select Committee question whether schools are ready to take this on.

Over the period of the Excellence in Cities and National Strategy initiatives, much has been written about the patchiness of provision that schools have been able to provide (Bonshek, 2002, Lowe, 2003) and a history of low priority being given to ‘gifted and

talented' provision (Select Committee 1999, Excellence in Cities, 1999). The findings of the Select Committee (2010) indicate that insufficient progress has been made over the past decade to leave this to schools unaided, and yet, unfunded, local authority advisers are likely to disappear over the next few years. When no extra funding is available, and as seen from the Bromley report (2010), now times are particularly tough for local authorities, 'gifted and talented' education is likely to receive no further financial support, relying solely on the commitment of individuals and schools to continue with the initiative.

One of the key lessons to be learnt from the initiatives of 'gifted and talented' education is the length of time it takes to embed new ideas. Teacher attitudes take a long time to change, yet there is evidence from this study that they can be changed. Equally, it takes time for new initiatives to find the right leadership and strategy to make a significant impact. At present, even though governments have remained in power for significant periods of time, their policies have changed more rapidly than professionals can realistically implement them. This is not only true for 'gifted and talented' education, but also for other initiatives in education.

In terms of the education profession having the commitment to the 'gifted and talented' policy without funding, the evidence seems to indicate there will be a return to patchy provision, where only committed, well-trained and charismatic individuals will be able to keep the impetus of the strategy alive in their schools. It seems that not enough time has been given to embed the policy nationally to ensure its continuity without the pressure of external expectation and monitoring. The evidence of the Select Committee (House of Commons, 2010) seemed to indicate that the initiative is not yet embedded sufficiently to ensure that this will provide a good level of provision for 'gifted and talented' pupils nationwide. The state of provision at the time of writing this thesis suggests that this situation remains unchanged.

Relevance of the Institution Focused Study

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a context to the research of the Case Study school, to explore the duties of the LA Adviser in the local authority the school was located, under the various initiatives, and look at the impact of political and financial pressures on her ability to deliver the policy in this local authority. This chapter has

given the opportunity to review the strategies through the eyes of the LA Adviser, and explore the issues important to her. These issues could directly impact on the school which is the focus of the Case Study.

The way funding has been used, the training opportunities made available to schools and how the complexity of government vision has been made accessible at school level has been heavily influenced locally by the role of the Westford Adviser. Also, the frustrations for the Westford Adviser due to the limitations of both government policy and the willingness of schools to prioritise this initiative have been discussed. In the main study, the school's point of view on these issues is explored, and provides a further opportunity to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the initiatives at all levels.

In this chapter, it has been seen (Ofsted, 2009; House of Commons, 2010) that there is still some concern about schools' ability to deliver effective provision for 'gifted and talented' pupils, both in terms of knowledge and motivation, despite the fact that local authority support is being decreased and increasingly looks it as if it may disappear altogether. It was important to explore the impact on the school which is the focus of the Case Study, of the withdrawal of such support, as it appeared from this evidence that the initiatives were withdrawn before schools were really ready to take on the initiative independently.

How the Case Study school has managed to deal with the many initiatives, and how the gifted and talented initiative fared against this background is explored in Chapter 5. In terms of patchiness of provision, how effectively did the school's 'gifted and talented' co-ordinator manage to disseminate knowledge to the rest of the staff, and how has this impacted on their teaching and learning? What are the attitudes of the staff towards the policy? This chapter has highlighted some key issues to explore in the main study, as well as raising issues that affect many further policies in education.

CHAPTER 4: Methodology

Exploring the impact of government policies for ‘gifted and talented’ children in an inner-city school since the launch of the ‘Excellence in Cities’ initiative (1999), this chapter describes and justifies methodological matters relating to the present research. This encompasses research design, the choice of the case for the case study, issues of validity, reliability, trustworthiness and limitations of the research, methods of data collection and data analysis. In addition, issues surrounding the researcher’s own stance and how these impact on the research are explored, as are ethical issues raised by the research.

Research Approach

Robson (2002) maintains that several factors need to be taken into consideration, prior to the commencement of research. Unsuccessful research, according to Robson, usually starts with expedience, motivation for personal gain, a lack of theory and the desire to use a specific method or technique, without consideration as to whether it fits the research to be done. Successful research in his view, on the other hand, develops from activity and involvement in the field, convergence of activities and interests, intuition but with a concern for theory, and real world value from the results of the study. This chapter outlines the ways in which I have addressed these issues, to ensure the research has sound underpinnings.

Choices of methodology emanate from the philosophical stance of the researcher, and in this section I aim to set out the position I hold in terms of the ontology and epistemology of the research. Scott and Usher (1999) believe that philosophical issues have not been given prominence in educational research, in favour of “doing” (p.9), i.e. emphasis on methods and procedures, echoing the assertions of Robson (2002) that a lack of concern for the theoretical underpinnings of research sabotages its success. This is because, according to Scott and Usher, research is not just a matter of following the right procedures, but is a social practice, without universal methods that can be applied invariantly, and which challenges the view of positivist researchers who view truth as an objective reality.

Research in the educational field is unlike that of research into the natural sciences (Robson, 2002) in that the researched are thinking, sentient beings, who have their own ideas about the world and act on them. A researcher who takes a constructivist/interpretivist approach incorporates this set of beliefs into his or her research methods, using the idea that knowledge is socially constructed by people active in the research process, and the researcher should try to understand their world (Mertens, 1998). It recognises that science cannot be value free (Robson, 2002). As Scott and Usher (1999) phrase it, the researcher is looking at “ends of value” rather than “ends of fact” (p.13).

The ontological stance of the present research is influenced by Mertens’ (1998) explanation that reality is socially constructed, and multiple realities can be apprehended, some of which may be in conflict with each other. It is assumed that rather than striving to find an objective reality, the researcher’s goal is to understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge.

Scott and Usher (1999) assert that interpretive understanding is a learning process involving dialogue between researchers and the researched. The social actor and his position in the research are emphasised, and this of course has an impact on the choice of methods used. The epistemological position of this study is that the researcher and participant are locked into an interactive process; each influencing the other (Mertens, 1998). Data collection methods are more social and interactive than those for a positivist researcher. The concept of objectivity is replaced by “confirmability” (Mertens, 1998, p.13) - that data can be tracked to its sources and logic is used to assemble interpretations that can be made explicit in the narrative.

This approach has been critiqued for the reliance on the honesty of the participants, and that by merely inviting participants to view things from a particular perspective, does not constitute a “science” (Robson, 2002). There is always the possibility that participants may not be honest about their true views, and this could be seen as a limitation of the approach, although the researchers should do all they can to ensure the participant does not feel pressure to tell untruths. Other researchers have more pragmatic issues with this approach – policy makers may be looking for key ideas in research to drive forward initiatives, and notions of indeterminacy and the necessary

incompleteness of this type of research are highly problematic (Scott and Usher, 1999). For some researchers, that this approach only aims to understand and not change the status quo, is seen as a weakness (Scott and Usher, 1999; Mertens, 1998). However, although this research study aims to understand if and how ‘gifted and talented’ policies may have impacted on inner-city schools, it is hoped that contributing to the body of literature on the subject may lead to change, if appropriate, in its own way.

The terms constructivist, interpretive, naturalistic and hermeneutic have all been used to describe research from this position (Mertens, 1998; Robson, 2002), but it is referred to as constructivist in this research as it is thought to best represent the ideas of this philosophical position. A positivist approach does not reflect my personal philosophical position, and positivist methods, such as quantitative approaches, tend not to allow the researcher to explore the research questions in as great a depth as qualitative methods.

Theoretical Framework

Chapter 2 discussed two schools of thought associated with theories of intelligence – the more conservative view (e.g. Plomin and Craig, 2001; McGue, Bouchard, Iacono and Lykken 1993), which sees intelligence as a single fixed entity, as opposed to the liberal position (e.g. Getzels and Jackson, 1958; Sternberg, 1985), where intelligence is seen as dynamic and a complex interaction of several dimensions. The theoretical assumptions underpinning this research follows the liberal position, believing that gifted education only has a purpose if it **improves** outcomes for pupils, and that with the appropriate interventions, ‘gifted’ children’s abilities can be enhanced beyond what they would gain from a school curriculum without such provision.

Following on from this, appropriate provision is required to ensure that pupils’ opportunities to develop their talents and abilities are maximised. In Chapter 2 some models were considered, some of which were subject-specific, or taught as a separate part of the curriculum. However, the assumptions of this study are that provision is more effective when it is embedded in the curriculum and is part of the whole school day, rather than as an add-on. Therefore the work of Bloom (1985), Renzulli (1988) and VanTassel-Baska and Wood (2010) provides the theoretical framework for

The diagram (fig 4.0) shows that some elements are very key to this research. Conceptions of ‘giftedness’, for example, are important both to the inception of the policy at government level, the consideration of the importance of the policy and the uptake of the policy by schools. Conceptions of ‘giftedness’ also affect school provision, teacher attitudes and knowledge. Many other factors affect teacher attitudes, including parental attitudes, contextual factors, school policy and the influence of the local authority. Teacher knowledge also has an impact on teacher attitude and provision. In this study, there is a particular focus on teacher attitudes and knowledge, because much of the strategy requires a change in classroom practice (DCSF, 2007).

Equally school policy can be seen to be affected by many of the components shown in the diagram, as the policy cascades down from national to local authority level and then to the school. At school level, other factors impinge on the school’s interpretation of the policy – parental pressure, teacher attitude, financial climate, contextual factors, as well as the conception of ‘giftedness’. It is therefore assumed that different schools will interpret the national policy in different ways within the parameters of the policy, and therefore provide in a variety of ways.

An interesting feature of the conceptual framework is the relative lack of influences on government policy – and that it describes a policy that is ‘top down’, a model where policy change is more imposed on the recipients by the government, rather than a policy that comes about as a result of a groundswell of opinion amongst practitioners. For example, it is possible that financial considerations could have been part of the decision to abandon the policy of ‘Excellence in Cities’ (DfEE, 1999), and that parents’ (who are voters) influences may have put it on the agenda, as have academic papers and inspection reports. However, the arrows in fig 4.0 do not show an influence of school level factors on government policy: rather they go the other way influencing school and local authority policy.

This study is very much concerned about how the Case Study school incorporated this ‘top down’ policy, whether the initiative had been embraced, and how the various interactions had been managed by the school. Even when clarified by this conceptual framework, it is clear that the school and the participants of this study have had to

deal with a complex set of constructs in order to incorporate the policy into their practice.

Case Study

This research adopts the Case Study approach, using what Stake (1994) calls the Instrumental Case Study, in that the purpose is to provide an insight into the effectiveness of ‘gifted and talented’ policy, with the case, the school, playing a supportive role.

A Case Study is a broad approach to social research (Denscombe, 2003), which has the following common features:

- It is a spotlight on one instance
- It is an in-depth study
- There is a focus on relationships and processes
- The research takes place in a natural setting
- There are multiple sources and multiple methods that can be used.

One of the issues to be addressed in considering a Case Study is the question of what the case is. Understanding and setting the boundaries of the case, therefore, is the first step of research design in a Case Study approach. As Miles and Huberman (1994) put it, the case is in effect the unit of analysis. As such, they see the focus as the “heart” of the case, and from that the researcher builds outwards (p.27). To do this the researcher should consider what is *not* in the study, using the conceptual framework as a guide. Denscombe (2003) emphasises that the case needs to be a self-contained entity and that it needs to have fairly distinct boundaries. Stake (1994) states that a case may be simple or complex.

This research study involves a school, which could in itself be interpreted as a case, with its own boundaries. However, in the present study, the case is the members of the school community who have some involvement with ‘gifted and talented’ education, because the ‘gifted and talented’ policy is not relevant to everyone in the school. For example, the school-keeper may be considered not part of the participant group, although in some schools they may run the Football Club or some other activity, in which case, they would be in the participant group. The setting out of the boundaries of the case at the start therefore, was problematic, and rather than confine the research

to who is in the participant group by role, flexibility was required to ensure that as more about the school became known, the participant group could be adjusted. Therefore, the focus of the case is the impact of ‘gifted and talented’ policy and practice within the school, and those outside of the case are anyone not in the school community, and anyone for whom the ‘gifted and talented’ policy in school has no practical relevance. In the grey area are children not on the ‘gifted and talented’ register, who may be indirectly affected by the policy, but who are not in the participant group for this study. This was because, within the limitations of this study, it was thought more important to find out as much as possible from the ‘gifted and talented’ pupils in the school who have more experience of ‘gifted and talented’ education. However, another area for further study could be the attitudes of ‘non-gifted’ pupils to ‘gifted’ education. Issues of selecting the participant group will be discussed further later in this chapter.

The boundaries of this Case Study can be illustrated using the model from Miles and Huberman (1994).



Figure 4.1 The Case as the Unit of Analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994)

Fig 4.1 shows the groups in the school community who had involvement with ‘gifted’ education at some level, and who were part of the case, although, as there was no link

governor for ‘gifted’ education, it was decided not to interview a governor. It also shows the documentation in the school that is relevant to the case, and that which is not.

Why has the Case Study approach been chosen?

According to Denscombe (2003), a Case Study affords the opportunity to put a spotlight on one instance, investigate a phenomenon in-depth, in its natural setting, focusing on relationships and natural processes. Kane and O’Reilly de Brun (2001) maintain that Case Studies provide insights into how and why something works in real-life, which is the focus of this research, in evaluating the impact of national policies on actual practice in schools. Cohen and Manion (1994) describe the purpose of a Case Study as being to “probe deeply and analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit” (p. 106), which can be described as the aim of this research.

Table 4.0 Denscombe’s Elements of a Case Study and how they are addressed in this study

Denscombe’s Elements of a Case Study	How these are addressed in this study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is a spotlight on one instance 	One school is the subject of the study, and is captured as a “snapshot” in time – the period of the data collection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is an in-depth study 	The focus on one school allowed a greater depth of study. As a researcher I was able to get to know the school and its community, which helped create a greater understanding of the issues associated with gifted education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a focus on relationships and processes 	By interviewing participants from different parts of the school community, it was possible to see how the relationships within the school impacted on the education for gifted pupils, and how the hierarchical relationships assisted or hindered policy implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The research takes place in a natural setting 	All the research interviews except for one took place in school, and the lessons observed were a normal part of the school day
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are multiple sources and multiple methods can be used too 	26 participants were interviewed from different parts of the school community, documents were viewed relating to gifted education and lessons were observed

An in-depth study of one instance was chosen over an approach which would offer the opportunity to explore the impact of ‘gifted and talented’ policy on several schools, but then (perhaps inevitably) only in a more superficial way, such as by the use of

questionnaires. It was thought that in order to answer the research questions, the views of participants need to be thoroughly explored within the context of the structures of one school. Cohen and Manion (2011) point out that the Case Study allows for providing a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand how ideas and abstract principles can fit together, as Yin (2009) points out. It can penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis (Cohen and Manion, 2011). Therefore the Case Study approach seemed the most appropriate option to choose.

Yin (2009), in his table (p.8), shows how Case Studies are the method of choice in answering the how and why questions, in a natural setting, in a contemporaneous context. The natural setting was important to this study, as it would reveal more about what was actually happening in schools regarding ‘gifted and talented’ education, as I was able to become really familiar with the school during the data collection phase.

Table 4.1 Relevant Situations for Different Research Methods (Yin, 2009)

METHOD	Form of research question	Requires control of behavioural events?	Focuses on contemporary events
Experiment	How, why?	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes
Archival analysis	Who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes/ no
History	How, why?	No	No
Case Study	How, why?	No	Yes

In the present study the research questions (p 60) are mainly ‘how’ questions, (through implication, even when the word how is not used, such as question 2), about how any possible impact is demonstrated and how teachers have responded to the policies, although there are ‘what’ questions as well (e.g. question 3 - what are the attitudes of teachers?). However, the focus is to study the questions in a natural setting and focus on the views of the participants at the time of data collection. Therefore the Case Study is felt to be the best fit from this model, as the survey and archival analysis have a more numerical focus (how many, how much?), which would not have allowed for such an in-depth exploration of attitudes.

In discussing his definition of a Case Study, Yin (2009) described it as not only being an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real-life context, but also emphasises that the boundaries of the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. This is very much the case in this study, which is primarily exploratory. However, as with any approach, there are strengths and limitations to this approach, which will be discussed below.

Advantages of the Case Study approach

Some of the advantages of the Case Study approach have already been identified, the relevance to this study have been considered earlier and can be summarised as:

- It allows in-depth analysis.
- It explores an issue in a natural setting
- It allows how and why questions to be answered
- Complexities can be identified and explored further

In addition, a Case Study is a flexible approach. It does not dictate the methods of data collection or analysis, and qualitative or quantitative methods can be used (Yin, 2009, Miles and Huberman, 1994). A Case Study allows for multiple sources of data to be used (Denscombe, 2003), as in this case, where observations, interviews and documentation analysis were used to build up the picture of how ‘gifted and talented’ policy has impacted on the school. It fits in well with small-scale research studies (Denscombe, 2003), such as this one, by concentrating on one research site.

Cohen and Manion (2011) believe that the richness of the data in Case Study research allows for subsequent reinterpretation. They see the Case Study as a “step to action” (p.292), as it is embedded in the real world and can therefore be used for staff development or education policy making. They also see a major advantage of the Case Study approach as being the accessibility of the language, which allows a variety of audiences to utilise the research. The findings of this present study will be accessible and useful to the school that is the subject of the Case Study, and they will be able to use the research for the development of their school and staff development, should they choose. The study also makes a contribution to the body of literature, through conferences, presentations and publications, in an area which is under-researched.

Another advantage of the Case Study approach in this area of research is the complexity of the concept of ‘gifted and talentedness’, and the controversy associated particularly with identifying ‘gifted’ pupils. The Case Study approach is particularly suited to exploring these complexities and how they impact on the participants and consequently the institution.

Possible limitations of the Case Study approach

Whilst the Case Study is considered to be a very useful research approach, as outlined in above, it also has disadvantages. A major criticism of Case Study approach is that of generalisability of the findings (Bassey, 1999). Stake (1994) looks at what can be learnt from single case studies and concludes that the case findings can be compared to similar research in the area. However, he notes that the purpose of Case Study is to represent the case, not the world, and that it is intended as an extension of experience, using methods of “disciplining personal and particularised experience” (p.245).

Bassey (1999) proposes a way to consider how generalisations can be made from single case studies, by forming what he calls “fuzzy” propositions and generalisations (p.51). The notion of generalisation here is different from the scientific idea of the term – which, from the use of controlled experimental conditions and statistical analysis, the researcher can measure the certainty with which they can assert their findings. With “fuzzy generalisation”, the user of the research will use their previous experience to improve their understanding of the research and evaluate the evidence, will enter into a discourse with colleagues about it, confirm its efficacy in the classroom and so on. This type of generalisation does not have the certainty of the scientific notion of generalisability, but does address how this research could be useful outside the boundaries of the case.

Yin (2009) discusses the concept of “analytic generalisation”, in which a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study. If two or more cases are shown to have yielded similar results, it demonstrates possible replication. This can apply to single case studies and according to Yin, should be the aim of case study research. However, what Yin calls Level 2 inferences are considered even more credible, which is where two or more cases support the same theory, but do not support an equally plausible rival theory.

The issue of generalisability is pertinent to this research, and whilst the aim will be to achieve analytic generalisation, it is expected that “fuzzy generalisations” may be able to be made from the results.

Denscombe (2003) raises the issue of reflexivity in case study. As part of the constructivist position, the interactive process between participant and researcher is recognised, although, in an effort to investigate the natural setting, researchers want the impact of this to be kept to a minimum. It is inevitable that there will be an observer effect, when participants know they are being interviewed or observed they may modify their views or behaviours, and this needs to be borne in mind when considering the results. In this research, the participants have been informed that it is essential to the research that they are as honest as they possibly can be, and that it is the policy, not them, that is under scrutiny. It is also possible that observations are often inextricably linked with judgements of good, outstanding or fail in teachers’ minds, as is the culture in English education at the current time. So every effort has been made to assure them that the aim, for example, of the observational methods is to find out about how their philosophy impacts on their teaching, rather than my marking them against external criteria, as would happen in an inspectorial observation. Even then, it is to be expected that teachers are tempted to make an extra effort to, for example, focus on the ‘gifted and talented’ in such observations – most people expecting a visitor make a special effort! This has always been borne in mind.

Reliability, Validity, Trustworthiness

The issue of the trustworthiness of the research is at the very heart of the quality of the study, and is influenced by the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher. In the positivist tradition, where the search is for proof of the real truth (Cohen and Manion, 2011), measures for ensuring reliability and validity are rigorously adhered to, although the more natural the research setting, the harder this becomes to achieve. Constructivist researchers regard meanings which are negotiated as a product of history and social structure (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006), and, therefore, tells a story based on data which has come from the stories told by the participants, in particular circumstances to a particular interviewer, and the outcome of this is not designed to be one absolute truth. Qualitative approaches not only have the disadvantage (in this regard) of being undertaken in the field and not a laboratory, but

also the research methods employed make it more difficult to prove the reliability and validity of the research, where the emphasis is on discovery, rather than proof (Denscombe, 2003).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) propose the following set of criteria for judging the quality of constructivist research with parallels in positivist research. The trustworthiness criteria (paralleling internal validity), transferability (paralleling external validity), dependability (paralleling reliability) and confirmability (paralleling objectivity), although these authors admit the parallels to positivist criteria make them suspect. In other words, a logical consequence to the constructivist methodology and to Case Study research is that the aim is not to be replicable – it is an account of the participants in that study, and the main criteria should be that the study reflects their viewpoints as accurately as possible. Silverman (2006) also makes the point that some researchers argue that reliability is a concern for quantitative researchers only. Yin (2009) identifies four similar criteria: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. These constructs have been used here to maintain the integrity of this study as described below.

Validity

Validity refers to the extent that the research accurately represents the phenomena it is focusing on. Silverman (2006) identifies two types of error that can occur with validity:

- 1) Believing a statement to be true when it is not
- 2) Rejecting a statement that is not true.

These errors can occur also at the data analysis stage (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Construct Validity

This refers to utilising the correct data collection methods to measure the phenomena. Yin (2009) discusses the need to use multiple sources of evidence to ensure validity. In the present study 26 participants were interviewed, so that the themes emerging and the eventual conclusions are based on more than one point of view.

Equally, a chain of evidence needs to be formed (Yin, 2009), so that the reader can track the way evidence has been collected from formulation of research questions to

the conclusions drawn from the evidence. In this study, all interviews have been transcribed, and the original recordings kept, allowing the opportunity to check on nuance of meaning in the data analysis phase, if this has been lost in the transcription process. Also, the protocol set out in the research design has been adhered to during the data collection stage.

A final check for construct validity recommended by Yin (2009) and Bassey (1999), is the opportunity for participants to review their interview transcripts, and amend inaccuracies. All participants, including the children interviewed, were given the opportunity to review their transcripts before analysis, although only 6 participants chose to do so.

External Validity

Yin recommends that in a single Case Study research is theory based. This is due to the issue of generalisation, already discussed in this chapter, where single case studies can be generalised if used in the context of similar work in the field (Stake, 1994). This research has been set in the context of a literature review, where evidence of teacher attitudes and behaviours in the field of ‘gifted and talented’ education have been discussed, although a similar case study of impact on a school has not been found in the literature for a direct comparison.

Other measures of validity

Other measures of validity in qualitative research are:

- Being open about the values of the researcher, to allow readers to evaluate the researcher’s interpretation of the data (Silverman, 2006; Barker, Pistrang and Elliott, 2002). In this study, the writer has been transparent about her values and stance.
- Describing the setting and participants to help the reader judge how widely the findings might apply (Barker et al, 2002). A description of the setting (p109) and a breakdown of who the participants were (Appendix 1), have been included.
- The impact of the researcher on the setting (Silverman, 2006) has been discussed earlier in this chapter.

- As far as possible, the researcher needs to assess the truthfulness of the account of the participants (Silverman, 2006; Barker et al, 2002). This is difficult to achieve, but by using a multi-method approach it is possible to make some kind credibility check, which is discussed later.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the ability to replicate results found in an earlier study. This is a test that is most problematic in a Case Study – what may be true of one setting is not necessarily true of another as settings are unique (Stake, 1994), but from a constructivist point of view, this does not necessarily invalidate the research. However, if the research cannot be generalised, as envisaged by Stake (1994), by corroborating other case studies, it could perhaps considered less useful.

In order for reliability to be established in a Case Study, Case Study protocol (Yin, 2009) needs to be followed (referred to as making the research process transparent by Silverman, 2006). The protocol includes an overview of the case study project, field procedures, the interview questions (Appendix 2) and a guide for the Case Study report. All of these features have been addressed at various stages of this research. In terms of the fieldwork procedures, the semi-structured interview schedule insured consistency between interviews, and were conducted in similar ways – tape-recorded and taking place in the same setting with the same interviewer, thus trying to provide consistency as far as possible, using methods that were intentionally flexible.

Yin also advocates the use of a Case Study database, consisting of a data or evidentiary base and a report by the investigator. All the data collected has been kept – the documentary and observational data as handwritten field-notes, and the transcripts of the interviews which are stored confidentially on N-Vivo software, on a password protected computer. The signed consent forms from the participants and any other documents gathered during the data collection phase have been stored systematically for easy retrieval, in accordance with Brunel University's guidelines (Van den Eynden, Corti, Woolard, Bishop and Horton, 2011) for keeping data. This thesis constitutes the research report.

To increase reliability of the study, other measures taken include paying attention to “theoretical transparency” (Silverman, 2006 p. 282) by making theoretical stances explicit throughout. Bassey (1999) discusses the need to have “prolonged engagement with data sources” (p.76). The data was collected over the course of 18 months, visiting the school on average once a fortnight, during which time the researcher became familiar with the school and vice versa. This allowed the researcher to become immersed in the issues of the school, and become more trusted by the participants.

Multiple methods of data collection

Triangulation was not used in this study to promote the validity of the conclusions as this is inappropriate to Case Study method, where the data gathered is viewed as a snapshot at that time. However, multiple data collection methods were used, which could be seen as ways of corroborating, but the balance of data was uneven – with considerably more interview data than observation and documentation data. Yin sees the Case Study as a good opportunity to use several sources of data, and sees the need to use multiple sources of evidence as greater in the case of case studies than for other research methods, because of the reliance on oral evidence, although this could be seen as a lack of confidence in interview data, which is not seen as warranted in a constructivist approach.

Table 4.2 Summary of the utilisation of Denscombe’s advantages of using multiple methods

Advantage of multiple methods identified by Denscombe	Seen in this study by:
More data generated	Data generated from interviews, observations and documentation
See things from a different perspective	Exploring what people say and what they do by comparing data from observations and interviews
Allows corroboration	Matching what people say and what they do when analysing the data, using coding by themes
Enhances validity	Greater confidence in outcomes if data has consistency across methods

In this study, the methods of interview, documentation review and observation are used to develop the converging lines of enquiry. In particular, the interview and observations provide an opportunity to develop converging lines of enquiry. One of the advantages of using multiple methods is that more data is generated (Denscombe, 2003), although this can mean sacrificing some of the resources that would have been put into any one of the methods in a one method approach. Another benefit is that a multi-method approach allows corroboration by comparing data from the different methods (Denscombe, 2003). Denscombe warns, however, that although this can enhance validity, it does not prove that the researcher is right – rather, it lends support to the analysis. A summary of how using multiple methods has utilised these advantages can be seen in table 4.2.

Research context: The Case

The choice of school for the participant group – an “Average Case”

The Case Study approach that has been employed in this research, as already described, is that of a single case, and the description by Yin (2009) of the Average Case Study which, Denscombe (2003) calls a “typical case”, further describes the design of this research. In choosing one school as a focus, certain criteria were considered. They were:

- An inner-city school
- A beneficiary of the UK Government’s ‘Excellence in Cities’ (DfEE, 1999) funding and programmes
- A Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator was in post in the school, who had received the national training in teaching ‘gifted and talented’ children.

The way that Excellence in Cities funding was distributed within this local authority (Chapter 3) was to focus it on the most socially deprived schools, meaning that the majority of schools did not gain from funding. Therefore in describing this as an average school, this does not apply to an average school within the country or even the local authority, but an average school which was part of the ‘Excellence in Cities’ (DfES, 1999) initiatives. It is thought that given that the focus of the research is the evaluation of the impact of the ‘gifted and talented’ initiatives, it is important to confine the research to a school that had access to the whole range of these initiatives. This limited the choice of school, but the chosen school is typical of a school within

the schools that were selected by the local authority to be a part of the ‘gifted and talented’ initiative.

Research Context

The school is an inner-city mixed community primary school, which was judged as “good” by the national inspectorate system, Ofsted, in 2012. The staff group is stable, and this has helped the school improve from being a school judged by Ofsted as “satisfactory” to their current “good” rating. The large school buildings are Victorian, and there is a relatively small outside area for playtimes and sporting activities. Nevertheless, the school achieves highly in sporting competitions across the Local Authority, which is a clear strength of the school. In 2013, it was 25th of 67 primary schools in its Local Authority in the “League Tables” as created by the Government based on SATs (National Tests for 11 year olds), with a high value added score (a progress measure from the pupils’ progress from achievement at 7 years old to 11) of 102.1, where 100 is average.

The school has a Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator, and this role comes under the umbrella of his wider title of Inclusion Manager. He is a senior manager. As the school has improved its results in Year 6 SATs, so their focus has turned more to the gifted and talented pupils in the school. There are many extra-curricular activities, some of which are directed at ‘gifted and talented’ pupils in school. A group of children throughout the school were identified and placed on a register, which formed a basis for finding child participants in this study.

Participant groups in this study

When using quantitative approaches, the issue of sampling is crucial to ensure that subsequent generalisations are representative and capable of accurate statistical analysis, otherwise the research will be flawed by sampling error (Cohen and Manion, (2011). The philosophy behind this approach varies from that of this research, but in practical terms, the number of participants required for a quantitative approach is far greater than could be yielded from a small-scale Case Study, such as the present one (Denscombe, 2003). So, when considering sample, the requirements are different.

There are a number of issues pertinent in selecting participants, to ensure relevancy of the data collected, whilst acknowledging the limitations of this type of research.

The sample needs to consider firstly who can contribute the most to discussions about ‘gifted and talented’ education within the school, whilst trying to maintain an holistic overview of the institution, as is the focus of the Case Study. Therefore participants are representatives from each part of the school community.

Table 4.3 Targets for groups of participants

Group	Numbers
Senior Leadership Team	2
Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator (also a Senior Manager)	1
Class teachers	9
Teaching Assistants	2
Learning Mentor	1
Parents of gifted and talented children	3
Gifted and talented pupils (ages 9-11)	8 (4 from Year 5 and 4 from Year 6)

The targets for numbers of interviews set reflect issues such as the day to day proximity to the policy, numbers in that group, and the influence the individuals may have within the school to affect the implementation of the policy. The number of participants interviewed in each group can be seen in table 4.3.

The largest groups in the school were pupils and parents, but it was anticipated that parents have less knowledge about the day to day implementation of the ‘gifted and talented’ policy, and therefore the professional group were proportionately more heavily represented. Excluded from the sample were individuals who have no input in the teaching or pastoral care in the school, to ensure that all participants have opinions about the policy in interviews.

The staff group should preferably include the range of age groups within the school, and all the groups involved. The staff group was small, and yet as part of the ethical considerations of this study, all participants should be willing volunteers. Given that

observation is one of the data collection methods used, it is understandable that some teachers were reluctant to participate as many teachers find being observed teaching stressful, although there was the option of interview without observation. However the target needed the majority of the teaching staff to consent to participating in the study in order to meet the targets set in the original research proposal, which created some difficulties, although there were sufficient numbers willing to participate eventually, allowing this target to be achieved.

The choice of parents was left to the headteacher and Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator, as the researcher had no way of accessing them independently, although this might have resulted in greater impartiality, as the researcher had no pre-conceived ideas about these participants. The headteacher approached parents of the children interviewed, so there was understanding of any links between the child's experiences of the policy and the parents understanding and knowledge of it. The researcher ensured that parents understood the ethical boundaries of the study, in particular that they had no obligation to participate, prior to the interview (discussed on p.122), and a copy of the consent form can be seen in Appendix 3. Whilst it is clear how members of staff know about 'gifted education' in school, it is not so clear how parents gain the evidence to have a picture of the provision their children receive at school. Parents learnt about their children's experience in school in the following ways:

- Parents' meetings
- Informal chats with the child's teacher and the Inclusion Manager
- Letters from the school informing them of G&T school trips
- From work that the children bring home, including their certificates of achievement for activities such as Number Wizard, and grades
- Newsletters and other communications from school

Two of the parents volunteered in school – one ran a club and the other had been on the Governing Body, and had learnt a lot about the 'gifted and talented' provision from this role. Parents knew less about the provision within the school day that

enabled the school to meet the needs of the ‘gifted’ children, although they were aware of setting by ability in Year 6 (11 year olds). They understood the challenge teachers faced working with a wide range of ability in their class.

As explained earlier, some of the child participants interviewed were ‘gifted’ and some were ‘talented’. The talented participants in sports were not necessarily gifted as well, and therefore did not go on the ‘gifted and talented’ trips, which gave an interesting insight to how children excluded from this group might feel. One of the decisions that posed some difficulty was whether to interview only ‘gifted and talented’ children, because reviewers of the policy (Radnor, Koshy and Taylor, 2007) believe it to be divisive and to have a negative impact on children not included in the ‘gifted and talented’ group. However, given the small scale of this study, it was felt important to interview sufficient ‘gifted and talented’ children to assess the impact of the policy on the intended children, and to pursue the impact of the policy on ‘non-gifted and talented’ children would involve several more interviews to evaluate a small point not really central to the study. This would be an interesting area to pursue, but appears to be more suitable as a subject for further research.

The school had 320 pupils on roll, with a capacity of 340, and of those 10% roughly had been identified as ‘gifted and talented’. These are the pupils that would have been considered in the sample for the Case Study. However, younger ‘gifted and talented’ pupils would possibly have difficulty in accessing the interview questions and checking the transcripts, which are lengthy, and therefore only Year 5 and 6 pupils (9-11 year olds) were interviewed in this study.

Methods of data collection

Case Study research has no specific methods of data collection (Bassegy, 1999), although Yin (2009) identifies six sources of evidence commonly used in case studies: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation and physical artefacts. Of these, documentation, interviews and direct observation will be employed – the other sources do not apply to his study as they are either unavailable (physical artefacts, archival records) or do not apply to the context of the study i.e. the researcher is not a participant in this study, and is studying the

school as an observer, not as a participant. The reasons for the choices of data collection methods are discussed below.

Interviews

The major source of evidence in this study is through interviews with participants. The purpose of an interview from the constructivist viewpoint, is to document the way in which “accounts are part of the world they describe” (Silverman, 2006 p.129). This means that participants will not only offer facts and details of experience, but adds to this, transforming them. This has led to criticisms of narrowness and inconsistency (Silverman, 2006) – narrowness in that there is too much focus on the process rather than the content, although this is countered by claims that both the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ can be addressed (Silverman, 2006). Certainly the content of the interviews are the major area for subsequent analysis in this study. But if the data is used to answer what questions, then the researcher is open to the criticism that they are being inconsistent to their own stance.

The interview schedule used was that of semi-structured interview. The degree of structure in an interview is guided by the amount of focus, the linguistic and paralinguistic framework, the data-recording method, the agreed mechanism for data collection, the explicitness of the agenda, and the timing of the interview (Scott and Usher, 1999). A disadvantage of the semi-structured interview is that although it sets out areas for discussion, participants’ perspectives on what to highlight when giving their viewpoints means that in the analysis it was found that not many aspects were discussed by all, or even a majority, of participants, which created some difficulties in deciding what to include and what to discard. On the other hand, a structured interview would have not given either the participants or myself the opportunity to explore what was important to them, and this was an important part of the constructivist nature of this research.

An unstructured interview approach was deemed inappropriate, as there were specific themes coming from the literature and the research questions that needed to be targeted in the interviews. In addition, there were limits to how much time could be spent on interviews, given that the researcher was not a participant, but visiting the school for data collection purposes. It is unlikely in an unstructured interview that the

conversation would turn to discussion about ‘gifted and talented’ issues, what Silverman (2006) refers to as “naturally occurring data” (p.113), given it is only a relatively small part of what the school does. A more focused approach was required.

Scott and Usher (1999) suggest that taking field notes is a more informal way of recording data, but the disadvantage is that it is difficult to get a full and accurate record writing notes, and therefore recording using a digital recorder was favoured, despite this introducing greater structure. All interviews were fully transcribed by the researcher. One interview had to be partially recorded by notes after a technical failure, and two interviews were interrupted by a fire drill.

Design of Interview Data

A set of questions was devised (Appendix 2), discussed with supervisors and colleagues not involved in the research, differentiated for each participant group, which formed a structure for discussion (Kane and O’Reilly de Brun, 2001; Robson, 2002), although this was used only as a basis to ensure the topics that were needed to be discussed were covered, and additional questions were asked in the interview process, to clarify and elaborate. In this respect, the schedule was different from a structured interview, but it allowed the researcher the opportunity to explore the issues that had evolved from the literature as well as other interviews, and obtain a rich set of data. The questions were devised, using themes that had emerged in the literature review, which were likely to be pertinent to the participants and fruitful areas to explore. The questions were labelled to indicate which of the themes they pertained to, as this would assist later analysis of the data. The teachers’ questions were labelled with a letter T, managers’ M, child participants’ C and parents’ P. The analysis of which questions relate to which theme are shown in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4 Grid analysing questions for semi-structured interview

	Policy	Identification	Provision	LA Support	Gov’t Support	Gaps in policy / provision	Personal impact
Question numbers	T1 M1	T2 T3 M2 M3 C1 P1 P2 P6	T4 M4 C2 C3 C4 P4	M6	T5 M5	T6 M7 C7 P7	C5 C6 P3 P5

Long questions were avoided (Robson, 2002), as the interviewee may only remember part of the question. The basic questions were constructed with supplementaries, to follow up predicted possible answers. Avoiding jargon (Robson, 2002) was important when interviewing child participants, although there was no way to avoid the phrase ‘gifted and talented’. Every interview began by establishing what this phrase meant to them, and what term they would like to use in the interview to express this phenomenon. In the interview schedule leading questions and biased questions were also avoided (Robson, 2002), although this was harder to avoid in interviews with follow-up questions, that were thought up on the spot. Table 4.5 below shows which key themes were addressed in interviews with different participant group.

Table 4.5 Key themes addressed in interview

Participant group	Key themes addressed by the interview schedules
Managers (including gifted and talented co-ordinator and link governor)	Knowledge of school policy, identification procedures, personal perception of a ‘gifted and talented’ child, description of provision, knowledge of government policy, local authority support, personal ambitions for ‘gifted and talented’ education
Teachers (and teaching assistants)	Knowledge of school policy, identification procedures, personal perception of a ‘gifted and talented’ child, description of provision, knowledge of government policy, personal ambitions for ‘gifted and talented’ education
Pupils	Perception of provision in class, personal experience of provision, experience of challenge, feelings of parents and other pupils about their membership of a ‘gifted’ group, personal ambitions for ‘gifted and talented’ education
Parents	Knowledge of provision in school, parental experience of provision, support given, feelings of parents about their child’s ‘giftedness’, personal ambitions for ‘gifted and talented’ education

Participants were informed, as can be seen from the Consent Form (Appendix 3), that interviews would take approximately 30 minutes. In reality, interviews with children usually took a little less time, and those with teachers around 40 minutes. The interview with the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator, a key informant (Kane and O’Reilly de Brun, 2001) as a participant with specialised knowledge in the school, took over 50 minutes.

When the considerations of time boundaries, efficient data recording methods and the unlikelihood of ‘gifted and talented’ education being a point of discussion in an unstructured interview were taken into account, semi-structured interviews were the

clear appropriate choice. Looking at Scott and Usher’s model of focus and framing, this places the research in the zone of weak frame and weak focus. It is fitting for a research study that does not have an expected outcome to remain comparatively loose in structure, to ensure some flexibility in response to the issues and themes that emerge, whilst ensuring sufficient structure to provide consistency in the research method.

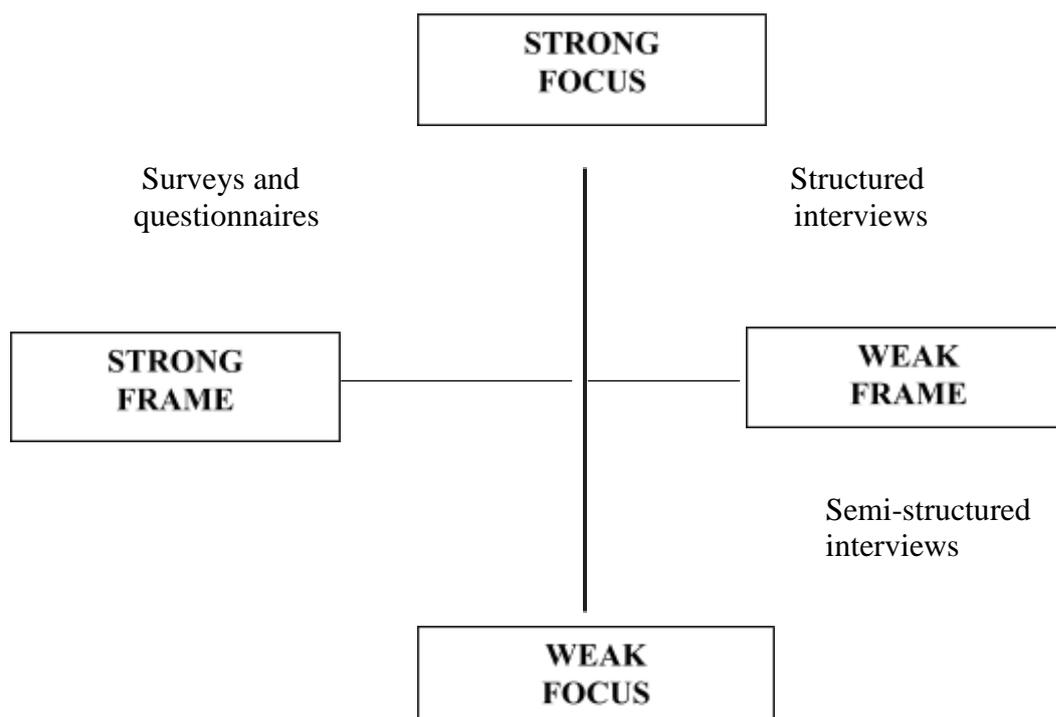


Figure 4.2 Interview focus and framing (Scott and Usher, 1999 p. 112)

A pilot study was not undertaken. The nature of a Case Study is that there are a limited number of possible participants, particularly within the staffing group when some members of staff did not wish to participate, and the aim is to reflect a ‘snapshot’ in time. A pilot study in the school would have the disadvantage of excluding some participants from the main study, particularly from the teacher and leadership groups, where there were fewer possible participants than in other groups. To ensure that the interviews would yield data that would assist with answering the research questions, I analysed the data from the group of pupil participants, which was formed into a presentation for the Pupil- Staff conference at Brunel in 2012 (the power-point forms Appendix 4). At this time, I was still in the data collection phase of the research and could have amended the interview or made other adjustments if this

exercise had shown that the research questions were not being answered with the tools I had devised.

Issues relating to the researcher / participant relationship in interviews

The way interviews are conducted affect outcomes (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006; Robson, 2002; Silverman, 2006). There are a number of issues that needed to be addressed both prior and during interviews. A major issue is that of the power relations conveyed in the interview (Scott and Usher, 1999), particularly in view of the fact that some of the participants were children. Gender, race and class are other types of commonly quoted influences (Punch, 1994), but in the context of school, seniority is also a factor that could affect responses. In terms of seniority, the researcher did not work in the setting, and introduced herself as a teacher, rather than being more explicit about her actual role in her own school. However, the very fact that the researcher is perceived to be an 'expert' in the field of study conveys a certain power relationship, alongside a knowledge of research methods uncommon amongst primary school teachers. In short, knowledge itself conveys a perception of power.

This was counteracted by sharing information about research techniques and the purpose of the research, as well as the interviews taking place in the setting, and not in the researchers 'home turf'. This was done initially via a visit to a staff meeting before the research commenced, and then clarified at the beginning of each interview. However, as Scott and Usher (1999) point out, the presence of an interviewer means that the respondent never has full control of the setting, and this will have an impact on responses. The situation with children is more complex. Two of the participants had attended a 'gifted and talented' maths project at the researcher's school, and had experienced her as a teacher, which had already set up a more formal power relationship, albeit more informal than in a usual classroom setting. The other six child participants had no knowledge of the researcher, and were clearly nervous at first in the interviews, in the presence of a strange adult. Scott and Usher (1999) suggest that they would respond as they would to a teacher in terms of the codes they had been initiated in to during their time in school.

Ways to try to minimise the impact of power relationships include observing local customs such as not sitting on a higher chair, and being aware of body language (Kane and O'Reilly de Brun, 2001). A good introduction, not showing negative reactions to what they say, and allowing them to talk without interruption, but listening carefully to what they actually say, is also advice that was heeded during the interviews. However, Sapsford and Jupp (2006) warn that a typically trained non-directive and non-judgmental interviewer can appear to be cold and stilted, which makes the respondent even more nervous, and they advise adopting a positive tone, smiling and using non-verbal behaviour to encourage the participant. As the goal of the interviews, in accordance with the constructivist stance of the research, is to allow the participant to give their account as openly and honestly as they can, it seems more important to put them at their ease and encourage talk than to adopt a standardised way of responding to them. The tone of the interviews were, in the most successful cases, a conversation, prompted by the interview schedule questions, where most talking was done by the participant, but was responded to by the researcher after listening to their answers.

By keeping the interview questions open and allowing participants the opportunities to speak freely and without interruption, personal bias was minimised. Also avoiding leading questions during the interviews allowed participants to speak freely about their views, rather than being drawn into the concerns of the researcher. I also showed early transcripts to my supervisor as a check on my interview technique, as I was inexperienced as a researcher. One of the advantages of not using my own school for research was that there were less issues of status, by virtue of my position, although there was still status associated with my expertise and expectations on this research. It was very important therefore, that I explained as much as I could about the research process as well as reassuring participants that they were the experts on their own views, which was their contribution to the research.

This was less easy to achieve with the children – as some are very articulate and speak freely, whereas others need more prompting. For this reason, the anticipated maximum number of children were interviewed to ensure there was sufficient data from this key group. Parents were also problematic to engage, with a number having English as an additional language, and race and social class being possible barriers to

ease of communication. To address this, I reassured the parents that I could understand their English, and allowed them plenty of time to formulate their responses to my questions. Fortunately, the school had excellent relationships with its parents, which helped in them agreeing to participate. It is possible that the study's focus of 'gifted and talented' children possibly led to a more motivated parent group than studies on other topics might.

Observations

A second method of data collection used was that of observation. Observation is a useful method to provide supportive and supplementary data, complementing data collected from other sources (Robson, 2002; Foster, 2006), interview and documentation in this research. Whilst observation is frequently used as a primary method (Robson, 2002), in this particular study it would have yielded a narrower participant group, as the only observation opportunities available are lessons. This would have ruled out the involvement of participants such as parents, and some members of the Senior Leadership Team.

The purpose of observing lessons was to see what the teacher's philosophy and ethos to teaching the 'gifted and talented' looked like in practice, to gain greater insight into their views of teaching and finally, as a means of corroboration or challenge to findings from other sources of data, to establish another means of validity in the study. This was only limited – only some teachers practically could be observed, and not all the participants consented to observations. Some of the participant teachers were non-teaching, or only taught groups which at that time that did not include 'gifted' children. As a result, only eight observations were made. Another aspect of the observations has been to explore the attitudes of the children to their learning, particularly as several participants cited poor behaviour in the classroom as an obstacle to achievement for the most able.

Observation provides opportunities for directness – the observer gains information by watching and listening, rather than seeing the information through the accounts of others, as in interview (Foster, 2006). The observer may be able to see what participants have not, particularly if the researcher is not a participant researcher, and does not take for granted behaviours and the environment in the setting, i.e. a 'fresh

pair of eyes'. It also allows an opportunity to see the impact of the 'gifted and talented' policy on children who have not been interviewed in the study.

Observation can vary from more structured or systematic observation (Foster, 2006) to less structured (sometimes known as ethnographic or unstructured observation). The more structured approach has its roots in the positivist tradition, and does not reflect the ontological position of this research. The less structured approach allows a lot of freedom in what information is gathered and how it is recorded (Robson, 2002), which is more suitable for the way this approach is being used in this research. However, this does not mean that the researcher does not have aims for the observation, or does not have some idea of what to observe (Foster, 2006). It can mean that the researcher is required to build relationships with the participants, and spend many hours producing detailed descriptions of human behaviour, but it can also mean that the observer maintains an open mind, whilst having a focus. This is the position in this research, which is more structured than the observation approaches of grounded theorists such as Glaser and Strauss (1967).

Having made the choice of approach, the role of the researcher as an observer had to be decided upon. The impact this would have in the lesson has been discussed earlier in this chapter, and in any event, given that the researcher was already known to participants through interview, there was little possibility of observing covertly. In this research, a time had to be agreed with the teacher to be observed, and they already knew the researcher and the purpose of the research. It has to be assumed therefore that the participants' behaviour will have been affected by the presence of the observer, in ways that cannot be known. This type of observer role is described by Robson (2002) as the observer-as-participant – where the researcher takes no part in the activity and is known to the participants as a researcher, although Robson argues that it is questionable whether a researcher can be said not to be taking part in the activity, in the sense that now one of the roles within the group is that of researcher.

Although the focus of the observations was to find out more about 'gifted and talented' education in the school, the observations were designed to be open-minded and to take a broad view of the lessons observed. This was to be analysed later by coding, and the structure would come from this process. However, to avoid

observational bias (Robson, 2002), a systematic approach was employed to record the observations seen. It was not possible to get a meaningful recording of an observation in a classroom – even using a video recorder, the classroom is too busy a place to capture all the activity on camera. It could be difficult to distinguish individual conversations in a noisy classroom on video also. For this reason written fieldwork notes were made contemporaneously (Cresswell, 2009). Afterwards the notes were reviewed and additional detail was added. The type of recording used was a running description, (or “observational protocol” – Cresswell, 2009 p.181) whereby the time of the observation and what was seen was recorded. Following the observation, personal impressions and thoughts were added (“reflective notes” – Cresswell, 2009 p.182). This method is not as rigid as systematic observation (Denscombe, 2003), which requires some restrictions about what would be observed during the interview, and might miss some contextual information. A more flexible method of recording was needed than that. This system allows for an overview of what happened during the observation, but is recorded in a structured way.

One of the disadvantages of observation is that, for teachers, being observed is often thought of as a very stressful event, and negotiating access for observation was the trickiest part of gaining consent for this whole study (Denscombe, 2003). A number of gatekeepers (head-teacher & teachers) had to be approached (Foster, 2006), some of whom clearly felt some threat from the research. Foster refers to a negative preconception of researchers on the part of teachers, but the impact of increasing numbers of observations for performance management and Ofsted purposes has also made the process stressful and associated with judgements about the quality of their teaching. My tactic was therefore to encourage teachers to allow me to observe them was to stress that I was studying the impact of the policy, rather than their teaching, and that I was not making a judgement about their teaching, rather I’d be seeing an illustration of how their views about teaching ‘gifted and talented’ children are demonstrated in their actual practice.

Documentation

A major source of documentation is, of course, the literature that pertains to this study (Denscombe, 2003), which is reviewed in chapters 2 and 4, but a more specific review

of documents referring to ‘gifted and talented’ education in school is a useful exercise as it provides corroboration and augments evidence from other sources (Yin,2009).

Finnegan (2006) discusses the differences between primary and secondary sources, explaining the difference as primary sources being written “by the people directly involved and at a time contemporary or near contemporary with the period being investigated” (p.142). Secondary sources, in contrast, discuss the period studied at a later date, and are “somewhat removed from the actual events” (p.142). Secondary sources interpret or judge primary material. This also explains the difference between the documentation within the school context, and that which is reviewed in chapters 2 and 4. There are both advantages and disadvantages to reviewing documents as a method of data collection. According to Yin (2009) the strengths and weaknesses of reviewing documentation as a source of evidence are illustrated in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Strengths and weaknesses of document review as a source of evidence (Yin 2009 p.102)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stable – can be reviewed repeatedly ● Unobtrusive – not created as a result of the case study ● Exact - contains exact names, references, and details of an event ● Broad coverage – long span of time, many events, and many settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Retrievability - can be difficult to find ● Biased selectivity – if collection is complete ● Reporting bias – reflects the (unknown) bias of the author ● Access – may be deliberately withheld

The documentation in the school is subject to these strengths and weaknesses. One of the greatest weaknesses is the lack of documentation regarding ‘gifted and talented’ policy within the school setting. The documentation reviewed included:

- The Gifted and Talented policy plus two updates (Appendix 5)
- The two most recent Ofsted Government Inspection reports 2012 and 2010
- Teaching and Learning Policy (Appendix 6)
- Literacy Policy
- Key points for mathematics teaching in the school (appendix 7)
- School Improvement Plans for 2012-13 and 2013-14 (Appendix 8)

Ofsted reports provided external views of the school and the School Improvement Plans revealed the school's reaction to this, both of which referred to more able pupils. The other policies were used to ascertain direction given to staff members in teaching 'gifted' pupils in general and subject specific ways.

The literature urges caution in dealing with documentation. The issue of trustworthiness is a major cause for concern. Robson (2002) states that the quality of the data needs to be assessed. This means checking up on how it was compiled, and the routines relating to documentation in the institution. Finnegan looks at "direct" and "indirect" uses of documentation (p143). Direct use applies where the documentation gives factual accounts of the subject matter, but some documentation may have the purpose to persuade or market an aspect of the institution, where you cannot use the source in such a literal fashion. The majority of the documentation encountered is of the former variety, but each document has been considered for its purpose and audience at the time of writing, to ensure the analysis given to it is appropriate and critical in approach.

Ethical Considerations

The first safeguard on the ethics of this study was that the Brunel University guidelines were followed, and an application was made to the Ethics Committee of the university and was agreed (see Appendix 9). The research was undertaken according to what was in the application which was approved.

Both ethics and morals are concerned with what is good or bad or right and wrong, but the distinction between them is that ethics is usually referred to as what one ought to do, whereas morals are concerned with whether a specific act is right or wrong, according to accepted notions (Robson, 2002). Many writers (e.g. Miles and Huberman, 1994; Scott and Usher, 1999) have described ethical issues that can occur when researchers use qualitative methods.

There are three stages in the research process where these ethical issues can occur – recruitment, fieldwork and reporting (Flinders, 1992), and four layers – utilitarian, deontological, relational and ecological. Cohen and Manion (2011), using a different model, label the four layers external, consequential, deontological and individual.

Other models look at ethical issues in other ways: beneficence, respect and justice (Mertens, 1998), or avoidance of pitfalls: exploitation, deception, revealing identities, fraternising with disliked groups and participating in dubious bargains (Silverman, 2006). For the purposes of explaining how ethical considerations were addressed in this study, reference is made to the model by Flinders (1992).

Table 4.7 Ethical Frameworks (Flinders D.J. 1992)

	Utilitarian	Deontological	Relational	Ecological
Recruitment	1. Informed Consent	1. Reciprocity	1. Collaboration	1. Cultural Sensitivity
Fieldwork	2. Avoidance of Harm	2. Avoidance of wrong	2. Avoidance of Imposition	2. Avoidance of detachment
Reporting	3. Confidentiality	3. Fairness	3. Confirmation	3. Responsive Communication

Utilitarianism

Flinders (1992) asserts that an action or decision is moral if it produces the greatest good for the greatest number. Flinders places three concepts under this heading: (Also Cohen and Manion, 2011; Silverman, 2006)

Informed consent

This involves the researcher being able to predict with reasonable accuracy the scope and focus of the research (Flinders, 1992) in order for participants to understand what they are agreeing to in becoming involved in the research project. In this study, many of the potential participants were informed about the nature of the research in a staff meeting. In addition, they were asked to sign consent forms which gave an explanation of the nature of the research and the amount of time they would be committing to (Appendix 3). In the case of the child participants, their parents were also asked to sign consent forms as well as the children. As the children would have struggled to understand the language on the consent form, it was carefully explained to them before interview, and they were frequently reminded that they did not have to participate and could withdraw at any time.

Avoidance of harm

During the fieldwork process. Flinders asserts that researchers are morally bound to conduct their research in ways that minimise potential risk or harm to those involved. In this study, the most sensitive part of this was observation of teachers, as many teachers feel exposed in this situation. Care was taken to ensure they felt they had control of the observation. This of course risked them ‘putting on a show’ for the researcher, but it was felt more important that they did not feel stressed by their decision to participate in the research.

Confidentiality.

Confidentiality is particularly important in a Case Study, as it would be possible for individuals to be identified. This has been addressed by anonymising the local authority, the school and the participants. In addition, I did not discuss what individuals had told me in interview, although sometimes general themes that had come out of the interviews were discussed in interviews with later participants.

Deontological Ethics

The term ‘deontological’ refers to what one’s duty is to do and how decisions are made regarding this (also Cohen and Manion, 2011).

Reciprocity

Reciprocity requires the careful formulation of agreements, which might include exchanging favours in exchange for information. In negotiating with the stakeholders, agreements were made about time frames, sharing the research information, and also a sharing of the researcher’s expertise in exchange for the accommodation of the project within the school.

Avoidance of wrong

This encompasses the notion of a dishonesty or deception on the part of the researcher. In this study, an openness with the institution and participants was a fundamental part of the research design.

Fairness

At the stage of reporting findings, there can be difficulties where participants could be embarrassed or upset by how they are portrayed in the report, as they may recognise

their contribution, even though participants are anonymised. However, is the withholding of information really fair, when only the researcher has it? This is an issue that will need to be addressed at the conclusion of the project.

The issue of fairness has also raised the issue of whether I have treated all participants equally. Although I have studied a school that I do not work in, I knew some of the staff previously, which could constitute a possible bias. Due to the size of the organisation, it was not possible to avoid interviewing all the participants I had met before, and therefore I limited the effect of this by asking the same questions in the semi structured interviews, and kept to the same protocol in all interviews. However it needs to be acknowledged as a possible limitation to the process.

Relational Ethics

Relational ethics refers to the line of thinking that we derive moral behaviour not from rules and obligations, but from our attachments and regards for others (Flinders, 1992). Stutchbury and Fox (2009) used the work of Flinders and also Seedhouse's Ethical Grid (1998b) to create an ethical grid, which I have used to evaluate my own ethical processes (see Appendix 10).

Ecological Considerations

Flinders (1992) defines ecological ethics as a set of interdependent relationships, which sums up the context of a case study. One of the first tasks as researcher was to learn about the 'culture' of the school – how the various members of the school community relate to one another. Other cultural issues include the difference in social class between the researcher and some of the participants, and the fact that in a multi-cultural school such as this one, there are many different nationalities, languages and faiths represented. Being aware of the language used, defining meanings and ensuring that participants felt they had had the chance to say what they wanted, were all ways that this issue was addressed. Detachment was not considered part of the process during fieldwork.

Ethical Considerations in research with children

There is a debate as to whether research with children is different from research with adults (Dockett, Einarsdóttir and Perry, 2011). Dockett et al, for example, point out

that the ethical relationship between researcher and participant is the same whether they are adults or children (ethical symmetry). However, Punch (2009) believes there are important differences between children and adults, such as competence, power and vulnerability with implications for research (see table 4.8 below).

Table 4.8 Possible bases for differentiating children from adults (from Punch, 2009)

COMPETENCE	POWER	VULNERABILITY
Understanding	Size and strength	Physical and cognitive weaknesses
Memory	Social status	Openness to influence
Language skills	Legal status	Dependence
Use of non-verbal communication	Institutional position	Trust

Competence refers to verbal competence, as children have less ability to understand and express abstract ideas than adults. Power relates to age, size and status. Adults are typically in authority over children, making it difficult for children to dissent as previously mentioned. Therefore, argues Punch, methods used need to be developmentally appropriate, that are able to accommodate a faithful representation of their views. In the interviews, I endeavoured to achieve that the child participants both understood the questions as far as possible, and by asking them to contribute any other comments aside from the interview comments. This put the level of participation as one in which the children participate in an informed way, but although they have a voice, they have little choice about the subject, or the format of the interview (Greig, Taylor and MacKay, 2007).

Greig, Taylor and MacKay (2007) assert that child participants are not legally competent to give legal consent, but they can give informed assent. Adhering to their good practice guidelines, the adults with parental responsibility for the participants gave permission.

Particular care was taken to ensure they had the right to both decline to participate, and to withdraw at any time. Interviews took place in their school, so they felt more at

home, and all the child participants were thanked for agreeing to participate, although no other rewards were given. Time was devoted to building an atmosphere of “trust and security” (Harcourt and Conroy, 2011, p. 41). Before the digital recorder was turned on, some time was spent on introductions, explaining the aims of the project and their attitude to it. Harcourt and Conroy (2011) note that a trusting relationship is more likely to overcome the predisposition of children to want to give a “right answer”.

Data Analysis

The term ‘data analysis’ has different meanings among qualitative researchers, and these interpretations lead to different methods of analysis (Punch, 2009). This reflects the richness and complexity of human behaviour and social life in natural settings. The techniques are often interconnected, overlapping and complementary, and sometimes mutually exclusive (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Cresswell (2009) describes it as following steps from the specific to the general. Miles and Huberman go on to identify a “fairly classic set” of six moves common across different types of analysis (p.8). These are:

- Affixing codes to set of field notes drawn from observations or interviews
- Noting reflections in the margins
- Sorting and shifting through materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences between subgroups, and common sequences
- Isolating these patterns and processes, commonalities and differences, and taking them out of the field in the next wave of data collection
- Gradually elaborating a small set of generalisations that cover the consistencies discerned by in the databases
- Confronting those generalisations with a formalised body of knowledge in the form of constructs and theories.

However, Miles and Huberman conclude that there are no characteristics common to all types of analysis. Punch (2009) believes this underlines the point that there is no one right way to analyse qualitative data, and much depends therefore upon the purpose of the research in deciding the methodological framework to be used. He

warns that “diversity is valuable, but scholarly rigour and discipline are also valuable” (p.171).

So methods for analysis need to be systematic, disciplined, transparent and described (Punch, 2009), so that the reader can see how the researcher drew their conclusions from the data. This raises the issue of reproducibility, discussed earlier. A constructivist position would reject the view of knowledge upon which the ideas of reproducibility and the audit trail are based, as the research is understood to represent the views of that participant in that setting, and does not claim more. However, a systematic, rigorous and transparent approach will allow the participants’ views to be represented in as an objective and impartial way as possible, and the reader will be able to understand clearly the process that was undertaken.

Choice of analysis for data

The first decision I had to make was which approach would be most appropriate for the interview data in this research. Grounded theory analysis with its open coding, where codes emerge from what comes from the data, followed by axial or secondary coding of the data, would have fitted well with the data in this research. However, this research, although exploratory, is not a grounded theory study, as there are clear predetermined themes that have emerged from the literature, which were used to inform the research questions and the semi-structured interview format. Therefore, at the first coding stage, the data was coded under these pre-determined themes. Punch (2009) also suggests that if a specialised approach has not been used, such as ethnomethodology and subsequent discourse analysis or grounded theory, then a more general approach is useful. This allowed for the inclusion of new themes as they emerged from the data.

Miles and Huberman’s (1994) approach falls into this category. This approach stresses that the data is analysed and not just summarised and described (Punch, 2009), and it therefore suitable for this study. The following processes were used.

Coding is analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Codes are tags and labels for assigning units of meaning. They are used to retrieve and organise, so the researcher can quickly pull out and cluster segments relating to a particular research question.

There are 3 types of codes – descriptive, interpretive and pattern codes.

Descriptive codes - require little interpretation, but attributes a phenomenon to a segment of text.

Interpretive codes - as the researcher becomes more knowledgeable about e.g. local dynamics, more interpretive codes can be developed.

Pattern codes - at an even more inferential level, emergent patterns can be identified, revealing relationships between different parts of the data.

Initially the codes were created from a provisional start list of codes prior to fieldwork, which emanated from the literature review and research questions. These codes were:

- knowledge
- in school provision
- outside provision
- identification
- teacher attitude
- challenges
- participant wishes

These were essentially descriptive and used as master codes. These were then subdivided as themes emerged from the data, and so each main code generated several subdivided codes.

In this study, the N-Vivo computer programme was used to aid analysis. Cresswell (2009) describes computer software packages for analysis as an efficient means of storing and locating qualitative data, allowing speed in locating passages from interviews, as well as facilitating exploring relationships within the data. Using N-Vivo according to the Miles and Huberman method, a 'parent' tree node is created. In this study, the main (parent) codes came from the master codes from the research questions, outlined above.

As the data was analysed, child nodes were created under these parent nodes, as subdivisions from the master codes became apparent. For example, under Identification there were six child nodes – early identification, mistakes in identification, multiple intelligences, school system, teacher role and traits. Early

identification refers to identifying children in the earlier years in school; mistakes in identification refers to where children have either been missed or included inappropriately in the 'gifted' education programme; multiple intelligences refers to views about the nature of 'giftedness' encompassing more than simply academic subjects; school system refers to the school protocol for identifying their 'gifted and talented' pupils; teacher role refers to the teacher's perceived responsibilities in identifying 'gifted' pupils and traits refers to the traits that participants felt identified pupils as 'gifted or talented'.

Approximately 50 child nodes were created, although some of these were duplicates because, as previously noted, initially pupil data was analysed separately and earlier, to check the validity of the interview format. All the transcripts of the interviews were therefore coded, and the data was sorted under the nodes. N-Vivo enabled me to follow which participants had said what, and therefore keep track of the data.

As well as the interview, the observation data had to be analysed. The purpose of this data was to corroborate findings from the analysis of the interview data and to provide additional data. The observation data was coded in a similar way to the interview data, using the same codes, although due to the format of the field notes, this was done by hand, rather than on N-Vivo. Some codes were not appropriate to observations as some data was not easily evidenced in this format - such as participants' wishes and identification.

The documentation was read and coded manually, using the main codes where there was evidence of data that contributed to this study. Clearly, the 'Gifted and Talented' policy had more to yield than, for example, the Teaching and Learning Policy, as the former was more specific to the study. Equally the Mathematics Policy was a very brief document, and presented no evidence or data for this study (Appendix 10).

It has to be recognised however, that given the constructivist stance of this research, other researchers using this data may have used different codes and seen different themes, thus resulting in a very different piece of research. As previously stated, there is no one right way to analyse data, but whatever way is chosen has an impact on the final product. Whilst I have tried not to lose the context of the data, and have tried to

ensure as systematic approach to the data analysis as possible, and thereby give as true account as possible of this case study, there is no true interpretation, and to some extent it is therefore my interpretation.

Summary

In this chapter the methodology of this study was discussed, outlining the philosophical position of the research, which is constructivist in approach. In accordance with this, a rationale for the qualitative methods has been given, and both the data collection and data analysis processes have been described. Ethical considerations involved in the research have been explored, particularly relating to children, as there were child participants in this study.

CHAPTER 5: Results

Introduction

In this chapter the results of the data analysis are presented. The main source has been interviews with members of the school community, although data was also gathered from lesson observations and school documentation. Findings are presented in the same format, gathered in relation to the research questions and presented by themes. The results from interviews for each theme is identified, followed by supplementary data from observations and documentation. Explanations and quotes from the data are used as evidence for the themes and subsequent findings. Table 5.0 presents the code used to indicate which group the participants' quotations belong to:

Table 5.0 Codes used for participants

Participant Group	Code
Teachers	T
Senior Managers	M
Teaching Assistants / Learning Mentor	TA
Parents	P
Pupils	C

Participants have been given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity (see p.123). The semi-structured interview format meant that participants addressed different aspects of the key issues, and small numbers appeared to support a particular position. This does not mean that other participants did not agree, only that they did not mention it. Where views differed, this is stated. Table 5.1 below, indicates the sources of data used as evidence for each question. Codes I for interview, O for observation and D for documentation are used with each quote, to indicate data source.

Some initial 'parent nodes' were created from the themes emerging from the literature, which subsequently led to the formulation of the research questions, although further codes emerged during the analysis process ('child nodes').

Table 5.1 Relationship between data sources, participants and research questions

Research question Number	Sources of data	Participant groups who were able to comment on this questions
1) To what extent have theoretical models of identification and provision for the 'gifted and talented' filtered into the policies within schools and consequently into classroom practice?	Interview (I) Observation (O) Documentation (D)	Managers, teachers, teaching assistants, parents, pupils
2) Has national policy on 'gifted and talented' education impacted on the practice of teachers in the school setting and if so, how is this demonstrated?	Interview (I) Observation (O) Documentation (D)	Managers, teachers, teaching assistants
3) What are the attitudes of the staff in the school towards the identification of 'gifted and talented' pupils and making specific provision for them?	Interview (I) Documentation (D)	Managers, teachers, teaching assistants
4) Have there been challenges faced by the school in providing for this group of children, who were selected as a requirement of the policy?	Interview (I)	Managers, teachers, teaching assistants

The main themes from the 'parent nodes' were:

- a. Knowledge
- b. In-school provision
- c. Outside provision
- d. Identification
- e. Participants' attitude
- f. Challenges
- g. Participant wishes

In order to provide coherence and clarity, these main themes provide the broad headings under which the relevant findings are gathered. For each of these, the results obtained from interview data are presented first, and results from documentation and observation data are then presented if appropriate. The intention is to give a more holistic view of the results, and ensure that the main findings are drawn from the

detailed data. It is also true that some of the headings are not of relevance to some participants, nor within the knowledge base, and so some participants are not mentioned in some sections. Table 5.2 illustrates which themes found in the main ‘parent nodes’ relate to which research questions.

Table 5.2 How themes relate to the research questions

Theme	Research questions
Knowledge	1 and 2
In school provision	1, 2 and 3
Outside provision	1.2 and 3
Identification	3
Participants’ attitudes	3
Challenges	4
Participant wishes	4

Detailed systematic analysis of all evidence from different data sets are presented in tables which are in Appendix 11.

Findings from the themes

Knowledge of ‘gifted education’ policy and practice

Evidence from interviews

Research questions 1 and 2 explore the extent to which national policy has impacted on school policy and classroom practice. Knowledge of ‘gifted and talented’ policy and models of practice is an important precursor to subsequent actions, so one aim was to find out how much theoretical knowledge participants have about policy and practice. This information was gained from school staff, not from pupils and parents.

Staff at the school were largely unfamiliar with the school’s ‘gifted and talented’ policy, relying on general experience and training to meet the needs of the pupils. Some teachers expressed their own theories about ‘gifted and talented’ education. For example Celia, a teacher, said:

*“What is a gifted and talented and what is a very able child, so to speak?
..... So is it gifted and talented in this school or is it gifted and talented per
se sort of thing?” (T, I)*

Initial Teacher Training was inconsistent in addressing ‘gifted and talented’ education, and some teachers could not recall any training in school, and several staff felt they needed more training in school.

Another finding that emerged was that teachers, and even some managers, showed little awareness of ‘gifted and talented’ national policy, although some thought they could guess what it entailed, based on their knowledge of other government policies, such as ‘Every Child Matters’ (DCSF, 2003) and or ‘Assessing Pupil Progress’ (DCSF, 2009). Managers were aware of the impact of the ‘Excellence in Cities’ (DfE, 1999) initiative on the school, and the money that had come to the school as a result of that policy, and one manager even credited it for ensuring that schools provided for ‘gifted and talented’ pupils. A few participants had an awareness of the national concern about the achievement of higher attainers, and assumed that a national policy would reflect that. Some participants expressed disenchantment with the number of government policies they has experienced. Tom, a teaching assistant commented:

“I know it always changes when new governments come in, but un terms of, I don’t know, I don’t really know what they’re looking for, to be fair. I just know it always changes.” (TA, I)

Not only were many members of staff largely unaware of national policy, few could recall what the main points of the policy were, even though about half of teachers had read it. Four members of staff (teachers, teaching assistants and managers) could evaluate it, and there was some dissatisfaction with the policy, which was seen as vague, procedure driven and outdated. However Natalie, a teaching assistant made the point that implementation was more of an issue than the policy itself, when she said:

“It is just adhering to the policy. Just so it is not just a piece of paper and a policy we can actually put into practice. (TA, I)”

However, teachers and teaching assistants attempted to meet the needs of ‘gifted and talented’ pupils using their experience and general training, which had the effect of disadvantaging the more recently qualified members of staff. Beatrice, who recalled being under-challenged in her own schooling, spoke of her own processes in teaching ‘gifted and talented’ pupils, in the following quotation:

“Sometimes you can differentiate by outcome but as you become a teacher and you teach and carry out various activities, you soon learnt that if they finish their work and they’ve got nothing to do, they’re going to be bored and then they’re going to mess around and

you don't really want that, so I kind of figured it out for myself so I've found it useful to have a kind of a bank of extension activities and problem-solving activities.” (T, I)

Evidence from documentation

The school's policy does not mention its link with national policy, but adheres to the government's target of identification of 10% of the cohort, and refers to the government's definition of 'gifted' and 'talented'.

The definitions are supported by reference to suggestions of “types of ability” by Ogilvy (1973) and a list of multiple intelligences from Gardner (1983). This shows that there has been some evidence based research underlying the school policy.

Summary of findings about knowledge

In summary, many of the class teachers and senior managers did not feel knowledgeable about 'gifted education' or the requirements of national policy. Most were unaware of national policy, and even when they were aware, they could not state how this had impacted on their own school. Most teachers either had not read, or could not remember, the detail of their own school's 'gifted and talented' policy, although those who could were able to critique it. There had been no recent formal training in school, and some of the more newly qualified teachers had thought it was not sufficiently addressed in their initial teacher training. Overall, 'gifted education' was not an area in which the staff in school felt confident.

In-School Provision

Evidence from the interview data

Research questions 1, 2 & 3 explore the provision in the school for 'gifted and talented' pupils; this analysis indicates what the school has actually put in place. Danielle stated:

“How do you know what's out there? It could be in any area. It could be something they didn't have an opportunity for, so it's all about provision and giving wider opportunities”. (M, I)

All participants commented on provision which was supported by observation and documentary evidence. In order to aid the reader through the large number of findings,

the section has been divided into sub headings using the ‘child nodes’ from the N-Vivo analysis:

- teaching arrangements,
- challenge
- differentiation

In-School Provision – Teaching Arrangements

Evidence from interview data

There were mixed views about setting arrangements for teaching literacy and numeracy, where children were taught in three different ability groups. Jessica, a teacher, explained that some teachers did not like ability groups because it makes lower ability children feel less confident, but as someone who was undecided about her own view, she found the differentiation in ability sets easier to manage. Several teachers valued having more able pupils working alongside less able, although only two teachers did not group by ability. Parents of the ‘gifted and talented’ pupils who were interviewed were unanimously in favour of ability grouping.

In-School Provision – Challenge

Evidence from interview data

Challenge, in this context, is taken to mean the provision of learning experiences, which are of sufficient difficulty that the pupil has to use considerable effort to achieve the intended learning goals. Danielle’s (Senior Manager) beliefs about every child’s entitlement in school with regards to classroom provision can be seen in this statement:

“Ensuring that actually their skills, abilities and everything else has been enhanced and challenged”. (M, I)

Did the school achieve this? Teachers believed they challenged their pupils, but evidence from pupils, parents and teaching assistants showed that this was variable, although overall pupils felt that the school helped them to develop their ‘gift’ or ‘talent’.

Teachers tried to challenge all children in their classes, by means of ability grouping, open-ended challenges and “pushing” children, although one teaching assistant

thought that opportunities for challenge were not always available. This view was shared by parents. One parent spoke of a discussion where limitations of the school “in taking children further” were pointed out. This parent believed that her child was bored sometimes, a view that was confirmed by all child participants, who felt that challenge was inconsistent. They particularly found revision unchallenging, and learning new concepts the most challenging. Writing tasks were seen as unchallenging if the teachers were insufficiently demanding in their expectations, as Selina, a child participant, explained:

“It was just like you can do whatever you want and you’re like, not pushed, like you get to write what you want and nobody says “Oh, that’s not good”.” (C, 1)

Shaai, a Year 5 child echoed this view (when asked if she felt challenged in her work):

“There is sometimes when I don’t feel challenged...when she [the teacher] has given everyone the same kind of work, and for me, even though we got the hardest one, I found it quite easy.”

Pupils felt well challenged in PE, but in the foundation subjects (such as geography, history, art and music) they felt under-challenged, and some of the pupils considered these subjects to be their special area of ‘talent’. Overall the child participants saw the school as developing their ‘talents’ in a range of areas, even if they did not feel challenged all the time.

Lesson observation evidence for In-School Provision - Challenge

It was easier to track outcomes in ability grouped lessons, because I could easily identify who the ‘gifted’ children were by asking the teacher where they were, and part of the challenge provided was in the differentiated tasks. In mixed ability classes, it was impracticable to find out who all the ‘gifted’ pupils were, as they were scattered throughout the classroom. In a Year 5 lesson, the analysis indicated this differentiation was made very explicit, in that they were told the level of the work they were doing. Level 5 is a challenging level for Year 5 pupils (9-10 year olds) and they were being supported by the teacher, but my fieldwork notes recorded that the group were “romping through” the problems, possibly indicating they perhaps could have taken on even greater challenge. However, in the differentiated mental starter some of the most able group were struggling to answer the value of decimals to two decimal places, indicating a high level

of challenge. The plenary also inspired some discussion between the most able about different ways they approached it.

In the Year 6 high ability group lesson, the evidence showed the use of an investigation proved challenging to all the children, although they needed prompts to get the challenge from the task. The fact that Frederick (who was having individual tuition with the headteacher for Level 6 maths) and Wei-Ling (both participants in this study) were unable to reach the solution indicates that the problem posed challenges for them.

In Year 4 in another ability grouped maths lesson, there was a focus on oral communication and teamwork, which was a challenge particularly for the highest ability group. It seemed that because of the lack of teamwork, they did not get as far as some other groups did with their task; the teacher intervened, which helped somewhat, although they were unable to finish the task. The group were, it appeared, challenged on the basis of the outcome, although the main manifestation of this was the challenge to their social interaction skills.

Flexible ability groupings were observed in the Early Years and a Year 6 ‘debate’ lesson, where questioning was targeted at the more able, although, from the structure of the task, the ‘gifted’ children were not actually working together in an ability groups. In the Year 6 lesson, the challenge was through the expectations set through the challenge success criteria and the questioning of children, often incorporating evaluative tasks. Danielle, the teacher, frequently used the phrase “I want you to challenge yourself by...” to prompt the children to get the most out of the task, and focussing on developing academic vocabulary, which she encouraged the pupils to use. At the end, some children made presentations, and again, they were required to evaluate against the success criteria. The children struggled to achieve this, although did so collaboratively with prompts from the adults.

In the early years, again with flexible ability groupings, the challenge was provided by differentiation of task. For example, in sorting words into groups according to the rhyming sound, one pair were given the words ‘said’ and ‘dead’, and knew they belonged together, whereas other children had rhyming words using the same spelling patterns. A lot of the activities available were unsupervised and therefore the pupils did not always

challenge themselves, but in the focused tasks with the teacher, the teacher had the opportunity of increasing the difficulty. A number of tasks set were open ended.

Finally, there were two lessons that were not ability grouped. One of the lessons, a Year 3 lesson, was resourced with problems, colour coded and labelled hard, harder and hardest, and the children, sitting in mixed ability groups, selected their own questions to answer. In this lesson, as an observer, it was difficult to identify who the most able children were, although the teacher checked which problems the children were doing, swapping some of the problems for easier ones for some. It appeared that this system made it difficult to target the work as the teacher wished, although it might have indicated that children are more likely to over-challenge themselves than under-challenge, as the teacher had stated in her interview. It was difficult to determine this from observation.

In the PE lesson, it was difficult to determine who were the most able. The groups were of mixed ability, and the activities were generally undifferentiated in how they were structured, although specific teaching was given to individual children in some activities, which provided some differentiation. Specific teaching was also given between activities, so the children were clear about what they had to learn, but this seemed to apply equally to the whole class. No specific provision was put in place for the more able, although all the children achieved well. It appears that there is a reliance on the after-school activities for providing for the more able.

Documentary evidence on In School Provision - Challenge

The Ofsted Report for the school (October 2012) stated that “In particular, the level of challenge provided for the most able students is not always high enough.” This is evidenced by the most able not making sufficient levels of progress according to Ofsted. This was also supported the views of the parents and children from the interviews, as has been seen on pages 135-136 and can be seen in Table 5.3.

Some of these addressed issues were raised in interview by some of the participants, identified in brackets, as seen in table 5.3 above. There was no mention of ‘gifted and talented’ pupils in the 2013-14 School Improvement Plan, however, implying that it was no longer a priority for the school.

Table 5.3 How proposed actions in the School Improvement Plan reflect issues arising from the interview data

Proposed actions reflecting issues mentioned by participants as requiring more provision in the interview data	Proposed actions reflecting issues not mentioned as requiring more provision in the interview data
More targeted and intervention work to take place with higher ability children (by M,T, TA P, C,) Develop more challenge (by TA, P, C) Higher order questioning and differentiation (TA, P, C) hold in-service training for gifted and talented (M, T)	Have a focus on Philosophy for Children and thinking skills for all classes, developing enquiry based learning Involve children in their own learning and extensions Develop more practical sessions, such as cooking, to embed skills

In-School Provision – Differentiation

Evidence from Interview Data

Amongst teachers, differentiation was commonly mentioned as a way to stretch the more able. Senior Managers did not think that the needs of the most able pupils were always met, however, due to the wide range of abilities in the classes. Teaching assistants also reported that differentiation was variable. Children were aware of some differentiation in lessons, particularly in maths.

Common ways of differentiating were using National Curriculum levels, or setting the task at three levels. In literacy, differentiation by outcome was more likely to be employed, and foundation subjects were less likely to be differentiated. Where teachers had an expertise in a subject, they were more likely to differentiate. Managers were not convinced that there was sufficient attention given to the most able, and a teaching assistant spoke of inconsistency in work differentiation, with some teachers very adept and others less accurate. A teaching assistant, working in a class where teaching was always in mixed ability groups, did not see any differentiation.

The child participants saw maths as the subject where differentiation was clearer. They knew that their work was harder, and also believed that they were expected to work independently, so the teachers could help their less able classmates. There was a belief, too, that their role was to help the less able. As Adele put it:

“They put us in into different groups – they sometimes put the smart ones in with the ones who need to brush up a bit. The smart ones can help them with it.” (C, I)

Lessons observation evidence on In-School - Differentiation

In the lesson given by the teacher who only used mixed ability groupings, after a whole class introduction, the teacher laid envelopes on the tables which had colour coded problems – hard, harder and hardest. The teacher checked which problems the children were attempting. The analysis of the fieldwork notes showed that one of the issues seemed to be that when children were stuck, they could not ask another child, as the other children on their table were doing different problems. The teacher also set a challenge problem for the week for the children to consider – how many minutes in one day? On the first day, one child thought they had worked it out, but was encouraged to wait until later in the week, so that other children had time to work the answer out. This begs the question – was the challenge challenging enough for the ‘gifted and talented’ pupils in the class?

Other teachers claimed to differentiate through ability groups, although in Early Years this looked very different from Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6; ages 7-11). In Early Years there was less emphasis on grouping and more emphasis on incidental learning than in Key Stage 2. Sarah, teaching 5 year olds, had groups for phonics, but also used open tasks that allowed children to work at their own level. In Celia’s lesson, (again 5 year olds) it could be seen how advantage was taken by responding to the children’s responses:

Celia and pupil:

T: How many have you got?

C: Millions.

T: Is millions a big number or a small number?

C: A big number. (Reception, O)

At the other end of the school, in Year 6 (11 year olds), Melanie taught an ability grouped class for maths, as described in the interviews. She taught the high ability group, but still differentiated by providing adult support for some, and in the way children were encouraged to approach the task.

In Year 5, the observation evidence showed that in Jessica’s (a teacher participant) ability grouped maths lesson, she achieved differentiation in the mental starter part of the lesson, by giving different parameters for the task – e.g. the more able answering questions about

decimals and involving greater and lesser signs (< and >). Again, additional adult support was used to help less able children, who also had the use of calculators. In the main activity, the 'gifted' children were told that they would be working on Level 4 and 5 maths questions on area and perimeter, and the teacher worked with this group.

In the Year 4 ability grouped lesson, money problems were differentiated, and less able children had the use of coins to assist them. The mental starter was also a different activity for the various ability groups. The main activity was an investigation - and teamwork was an explicit part of the task. The teacher worked with all groups, but spent a lot of time with the high ability group.

Another lesson observed was a cross-curricular project based on the poem *Albert and the Lion*. This was a speaking and listening activity, preparing the writing of an argument text by debating whether animals should be kept in zoos. Success criteria were clearly displayed, including challenge criteria, which provided one form of differentiation. This Year 6 lesson also included participants from this study, but could not be grouped by ability, as they formed groups based on their opinions as the lesson went on. The adult support focused on the 'undecided' children, who found it hard to place themselves in the parts of the room that were for or against the arguments. Children were also asked to evaluate the quality of the arguments of their group at the end of the lesson, which gave opportunities for the more able children to be challenged.

The PE lesson observed used self-selected groups, with additional conditions, apparently aimed at working with mixed ability groups. Provision was undifferentiated, although individual children were given coaching on specific points during parts of the lesson. Tom's (a teaching assistant) ability to intervene at times was hampered as he had to act as referee, so that he relied on plenaries throughout the lesson to address learning points.

The evidence from the observations showed that differentiation appeared to support what teachers had indicated in their interviews, and that ability grouping was seen, except in classes where the teacher only used mixed ability groups. Teachers used a variety of ways to differentiate, hence the detailed description of what was seen in lessons being included here. Table 5.4 shows how lessons were grouped, and whether differentiation and challenge were observed for the 'gifted' pupil.

Table 5.4 Summary of findings from lesson observations

Year group and Subject	Type of grouping	Apparent differentiation	Apparent challenge
Year 6 Maths	Ability	Yes	Yes
Year 5 Maths	Ability	Yes	Yes
Year 4 Maths	Ability	Yes	Yes
Year 6 cross curricular	Loosely ability grouped	Yes	Yes
Reception	Loosely ability grouped	Yes	Yes
Reception	Loosely ability grouped	Yes	Yes
PE Year 5	Mixed ability	Yes, but not specifically targeted	No
Year 3 Maths	Mixed ability	Yes, but not specifically targeted	No

Documentation evidence on groupings and differentiation

The school’s Teaching and Learning Policy states:

“Ability groups and guided sessions (reading, writing and numeracy) allow teachers to effectively differentiate planning and tailor teaching and learning for specific next steps”. (D)

This is echoed in the Gifted and Talented Policy, which discusses groupings:

“Flexible groupings within the classroom and setting are used to enable pupils to work at high levels. We recognise, however, that setting does not remove the need for differentiation.” (D)

This shows that the school clearly advocates the use of ability grouping as an arrangement for teaching, although as has been seen, not all teachers adhere to this. On differentiation, the Gifted and Talented Policy provides some guidance:

“Lessons need to provide opportunities for extension and enrichment. More able pupils are allowed to move on more quickly to more challenging activities or to undertake more independent study. Planning reflects the need for extension and enrichment”. (D)

One of the issues raised by the child participants was the lack of challenge associated with revision of previously learnt work. This is also addressed by the Gifted and Talented Policy when it said:

“We recognise the importance of establishing the extent of each pupil’s prior knowledge and understanding, in order to avoid unnecessary repetition of work, which is both boring and demotivating.” (D)

The school, therefore, has tried to address this issue, but it appears that not all teachers are adhering to the guidance given by the policy, as was suggested by one of the teaching assistants earlier.

In 2010, the Ofsted inspection report commented on differentiation, when it stated:

“The pupils are gaining ground due to wide-ranging support which meets their individual needs well” (D)

It also stated that staff provide sensitive support for the pupils, naming ‘gifted and talented’ pupils as a group that is benefiting from this input.

Summary of Evidence for Provision.

- Most teachers were broadly satisfied with the curriculum offered to ‘gifted’ pupils, although music was considered to be an area for development by two teachers.
- Most teachers used ability grouping at least some of the time, particularly in maths, and setting took place for literacy and maths for 11 year olds although some never grouped by ability. Parents were advocates of ability grouping.
- Several teachers believed that they challenged all the children in their class, including the more able. This view was not supported entirely by either pupils or their parents, who felt that the amount of challenge was variable, and there was too much repetition. Overall they believed that their ‘gifts’ and ‘talents’ were nurtured well within the school. Lesson observation evidence and documentation

evidence from the Ofsted Report supported the view that challenge was inconsistent.

- Differentiation is seen by teachers as the major tool for providing for the ‘gifted and talented’ children in their class, although not all teachers felt equipped to plan challenging lessons for ‘gifted and talented’ pupils, and both teaching assistants and senior managers commented that teachers’ ability to do this well in the school varied. Observation data confirmed this.
- Differentiated activities were more clearly provided in maths.
- The documentation shows that the school advocates the use of ability grouping and setting, but some teachers never group by ability, which was seen to impact on their ability to differentiate successfully and challenge their pupils in some cases.

Outside Provision

Evidence from interview data

Research questions 1, 2 and 3 incorporated the entirety of the school’s provision, which included provision for ‘gifted’ pupils from outside providers. The analysis of interview data indicated that the school was in a partnership with a local secondary school to help provide PE, and Tom, Teaching Assistant participant (see Appendix 1) had benefited from training through this arrangement. The Local Authority provided some class based music programmes, although these were not targeted at the ‘gifted and talented’ pupils. In addition, one-off workshops with local theatres or companies such as The Happy Puzzle Company had provided enrichment activities. The Local Authority Adviser had organised ‘gifted and talented’ opportunities for schools in the Borough, and the school had made use of some of the trips that were offered. Children from the Gifted and Talented Register were invited to go on these trips, although they were not targeted at their domain of gift or talent. Therefore children who were mathematically ‘gifted’ could go on a trip with an art focus. The school also participated in the Maths Tournament competition arranged by the Local Authority.

Interview evidence also showed that extra-curricular clubs were seen as an important part of provision, some of which were aimed at ‘gifted and talented’ pupils, particularly the sports activities and a Maths Club. Teachers and Teaching Assistants

were involved in running these clubs. The Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator had been involved in creating a number of clubs and enrichment activities for the pupils. This included creating a new level to their ‘Number Wizard’ maths programme to include a Platinum level, as some pupils had already achieved gold, and exploring ways of enriching writing experiences for more able pupils in school.

All the parent and child participants wanted to see more extra-curricular provision. The pupils, in particular, associated ‘gifted and talented’ provision with provision outside of the classroom. There was a belief that such “trips” were a reward for good behaviour, as Adele said:

“..but sometimes I wish more people could go on them, because there are some children in my class who I think are really good, and it is a shame that the people in my class who behave properly don't get to go on these big trips.”

Amongst the child participants, some recognised that that trips did not always relate to their domain of talent, and that being on the Gifted and Talented Register was the reason they were chosen for “Gifted and Talented trips”.

Documentation evidence on outside provision

Ofsted in 2010 described the good use made of partnerships with outside agencies, to support the pupils in their learning. They also referred to the wide range of extra-curricular and physical activities on offer. Some of these activities are named in the School Improvement Plan 2013-14 as a means of raising standards in some curricular areas.

Summary of evidence on outside provision

- The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular enrichment provision – some is provided by the school, some by outside providers working in partnership with the school and some provided by the Local Authority whilst ‘gifted and talented’ money was still available. This was confirmed by Ofsted.
- Both children and parents in particular saw this as the major provision for ‘gifted education’.
- Pupils and some teachers saw ‘gifted education’ trips as a reward for good behaviour.

- Once a child was identified as being in the ‘gifted’ group they went on trips, even if their talent was not in the domain that was the focus of the trip.

Identification

Evidence from the interview data

Research questions 1 and 3 refer to the transference of theories of ‘gifted education’ into the school’s practice. The analysis of the interview data showed that there was a school system in place for identifying ‘gifted and talented’ pupils. This involved an email being sent every September, with the names of pupils on the Gifted and Talented Register.

Teachers could then consult with the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator if they wanted to add to or change the list. In addition, there were informal ways that children could be placed on the register – through discussion with the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator, who may, if time allowed, come and observe the child. There were also regular Pupil Progress Meetings, where a pupil could be identified as ‘gifted and talented’. The head-teacher also had oversight of the Gifted and Talented Register, and questioned the presence or absence of a child on the Register.

The evidence showed that application of the school procedures varied within the staff group. Some teachers received their list of ‘gifted and talented’ pupils and accepted it, whereas others saw this as a time to consider whether the right children were on it.

Members of staff saw themselves as nominating children for the Register, which was held by the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator, although their involvement in the process varied, depending upon their engagement with ‘gifted education’.

Participants described some of their own theories underpinning the way they identify ‘gifted and talented’ pupils. Several teachers believed that ‘giftedness’ was domain - specific, and some considered an ability to grasp new concepts an attribute. All the teachers looked for children with a special interest. Other traits that were mentioned were: being articulate; leadership skills; thinking outside the box; an ability to go into depth with a task; natural aptitude, perseverance and creativity. A clear ethos of the school is that everyone has a ‘gift’ or ‘talent’, and therefore it is not surprising that there was an emphasis on looking at a range of domains to identify the ‘gifted and talented’, although Celia (an Early Years teacher) felt that identifying non-academic talents

becomes harder as the children go up the school, due to less “creative space” in the curriculum.

Some teachers viewed ‘gifted’ traits as fixed, and this led to some teachers being reluctant to identify children in the Early Years, although the lack of skills of young children was cited as another limiting factor. Some children, who had been identified as ‘gifted’ early on but had not developed their talent subsequently, were regarded as “mistakes” by some teachers, although others felt the “mistakes” were more about the children that had been missed, and therefore did not receive the extra provision that they would have benefited from.

Parents also shared their views about the identification of ‘gifted and talented’ children in school. One parent thought that selection involved finding the children working at a higher level than their age, and that they would then be taught using more advanced materials. They spoke of how they noticed their child’s talent – some knew early on, even in the Nursery, that their child was bright, whereas one parent only realised when her child was older, although the child had English as an Additional Language, which may explain the time difference.

Parents looked for different traits in identifying their own child as ‘gifted’: independence of mind; perfectionism; enjoyment of learning; creativity; writing and reading a lot for pleasure; an ability to work on hard maths problems with ease. They recognised that ‘giftedness’ was more than academic achievement, and saw their child’s talents in a range of domains, and one parent was concerned about how such diversity could be reconciled. Parents all supported their children at home by providing emotional support or practical assistance, such as buying resources or helping with homework.

The pupils generally used their known achievements in school as the reason they have been selected as ‘gifted or talented’. However, Adele thought friendship and kindness were her greatest ‘gifts’, and Shaai linked ‘giftedness’ to good behaviour. For Selina, a positive attitude was the most important trait.

Summary

- Teachers followed the school advice and policy on identifying ‘gifted and talented’ pupils, which is based on government requirements then to identify 10% of the cohort.
- They consulted with the Inclusion Manager to put a child on the register, although some staff were more proactive than others. Teaching assistants were as happy as teachers to do this.
- Teachers look for high achievement against age related expectations either in tests or in classroom performance as one indicator of ‘giftedness’, as did parents, who also considered how quickly their children grasped new concepts. Pupils relied on feedback from the teacher and awards for school.
- Adult participants had a range of different ideas about ‘giftedness’ traits that they used to support identification.
- Most of the staff, parents and pupils responses suggested that they believed that ‘giftedness’ was not domain specific, and covers a range of domains.
- Some teachers were wary of identifying ‘giftedness’ young, and believed that ‘giftedness’ was not a permanent state.

Participants’ attitudes to ‘Gifted and Talented’ Education

Evidence from the interview data

Research question 2 sought to explore the attitudes of the participants to some aspects of ‘gifted education’. Many participants disliked the term ‘gifted and talented’ – for example, Jessica (a teacher) described it as a “strange term” and Delia, a child, saying, “I wouldn’t say gifted and talented, I would say role model”. Some of the teachers believed that the term implied a level of ability that did not describe the children they taught. Beatrice epitomised this position when she said:

“So I guess in this setting they are gifted and talented, because they are head and shoulders above the majority of the class. But I just worry that if they were in another setting.....then they wouldn’t be gifted and talented in that setting.” (T, I)

The staff were a little uncomfortable about children knowing who was in the ‘gifted and talented’ group, and there were mixed views about this. Some thought the children handled it well and, as Beatrice (a teacher) put it, did not “look down on other children.” However, another teacher, Melanie, was concerned that the ‘gifted and talented’ children

had a superior attitude. Some adult participants were concerned that the labelling may make the ‘gifted and talented’ children feel different, even believing that there was a stigma attached to the label, although the children reported being proud to be in the group. There were some reservations about choosing children to go on the register, because of the strong school ethos that every child has a ‘gift’ or ‘talent’.

There was no clear agreement between child participants about other children’s reactions to them being in the ‘gifted’ group, although some insights are given by the two ‘talented’ participants, who were not in the ‘gifted’ group. Some participants thought other children were jealous when they went on trips, although one was dismissive of the idea that they were jealous, feeling it was a lack of effort on their part which stopped them being in the group. Olu, a ‘talented’ child in sport but not ‘gifted’ academically, gave an insight of the views of the children in the ‘non gifted’ group, when he said he did not mind children going on trips, as they behaved well and worked hard. Tobi, another ‘talented’ child, felt proud of being in the same class as the ‘gifted’ children. Some of the ‘gifted’ children thought that trips would not really be enjoyed by the ‘non-gifted’ group, but tried to be sensitive to others’ feelings. All parents and child participants reported that the parents were very proud that the children had been selected for the ‘gifted and talented’ register.

Some participants were concerned that ‘gifted and talented’ provision denies opportunities for other children, although Tom, a teaching assistant, spoke of his argument against this view, when he said:

“But my argument was, well, if say a child is good at something, then why should they be left out because someone isn’t, just to give that person a chance?” (TA, I)

Several participants spoke of the lack of attention paid to ‘gifted and talented’ pupils, with lower ability children taking up more of the adults’ time, as more able children could be relied on to work independently. Nevertheless most participants thought that identification is important, to ensure that they can identify their ‘talent’ or ‘gift’ and nurture it. Identifying the ‘gifted and talented’ cohort was seen as meeting every child’s needs – as Beatrice (a teacher) explained:

“I think they need identifying because I think they need to be catered for, because I think it’s not fair to them – there’s no point in doing work that’s too easy” (T, I)

Some teachers were quite passionate in their belief that children’s abilities needed to be recognised. Pavla (a teacher) explained her views:

“I think it is very easy for a child whose abilities are not recognised – or maybe at home - to kind of squash them and never develop them, and it is a waste. It is just a terrible waste.” (T, I)

Fixed views of intelligence impacted on their views of identification, and some teachers believed that their pupils would not compare favourably with pupils from the provinces, whilst others did not see ‘giftedness’ as a permanent trait. Some of the staff wanted to identify ‘gifted’ pupils as early as possible to have maximum opportunities to develop their abilities.

Teachers were also asked if they felt supported in delivering ‘gifted and talented education’ in school. Their views were mixed. No-one felt supported by government policy, although Senior Managers felt that the Local Authority had supported them. Support from school was received in a mixed way – some participants felt that there were informal means of support, many citing the Inclusion Manager and the Headteacher as the providers of this. A minority felt that there was not much support, but recognised that this was to be a school focus (in the School Improvement Plan). Charlotte (Senior Manager) confirmed that this was a focus of the School Improvement Plan in that coming year, particularly as higher attaining pupils had been identified by Ofsted, the School Inspection Team, as an area of development.

Evidence from Documentation

The school’s policy for ‘gifted and talented’ pupils sets out as its rationale:

“We believe in the development of the whole child, and that every individual should have the opportunity to develop and achieve their potential. We believe that the able child needs just as much support, guidance and encouragement as the less able child.” (D)

This echoed the views of several of the participants, as outlined above, that provision for ‘gifted’ pupils should be *equitable* to other pupils, and their rights to receive as much support as the less able child.

Another policy that could impact on teachers' attitudes towards 'giftedness' is the Teaching and Learning Policy, which states that children are lifelong learners, who "*deserve inspirational and enjoyable education*". Other points from the policy that should impact on the provision for 'gifted and talented' learners are ensuring consistency in teaching, maintaining high expectations and enabling children to reach their full potential and encouraging the children to develop confidence, investigation skills and persistence. The latter point is particularly pertinent to 'gifted' pupils.

Summary

- A minority of children and some teachers stated they felt uncomfortable with using the term 'gifted and talented', and two others interpreted the term to mean exceptional, rather than high ability.
- There were mixed feelings about openly identifying these pupils, some seeing clear benefits in ensuring their talents were nurtured, others worrying about the impact on other pupils, and possible ramifications in the relationships between 'gifted' and 'non-gifted' pupils. The pupils had experienced both of these fears, but were mostly very positive about being in the 'gifted' group.
- A majority of staff thought identifying 'gifted' pupils was important and that their talents should be nurtured, but some were concerned that this might be at the expense of other groups of pupils. The notion of equity for all pupils is also supported by school policies for Gifted and Talented and Teaching and Learning.
- Some of the teachers seemed to view ability or intelligence as 'fixed state', whereas others believed intelligence to be 'dynamic'. Some saw 'giftedness' as a temporary and relative concept.

Challenges faced in implementing 'gifted and talented' provision

Evidence from the interview data

Research question 4 asks what challenges teachers faced in providing for 'gifted and talented' pupils and therefore questions were asked during the semi-structured interviews to ascertain what issues teachers thought prevented them from providing well for this group of pupils.

Participants from both the staff and children's groups thought behaviour in the classroom was a barrier to learning for the most able pupils. As Natalie, a teaching assistant, explained:

"The dynamics of the classroom are sometimes what stops us from giving the support to the gifted and talented children..." (TA, I)

Adele (a child participant) showed her concern for the behaviour in the class, when she commented:

"Me and my friends, I don't know how we can survive in this environment of behaviour." (C, I)

Stephen, a manager, saw behaviour impact on teaching in a different way. As teachers were constantly asking children to be quiet, the well-behaved children become silent, not asking questions and do not want to "bother" the teacher, as that is seen as being a nuisance, in their eyes. This view was corroborated by the participants who believed that independence was a part of being in the 'gifted and talented' group.

A lack of time was another barrier in the provision of 'gifted education'. One teacher reported that the lack of time led to only "scratching the surface" of the talents of the children. One of the parents worried that her child did not get enough time devoted to her level in lessons.

Evidence from lesson observations

During the whole study, I saw very little poor behaviour around the school, and none in the lessons I observed, although my presence could explain a higher than usual standard of behaviour. In every lesson I observed, most children were on task and enthusiastic about their learning, as were the teachers. At times, an unsupervised group would be off task for a while, but this was usually dealt with quickly.

In the lessons where the pupils were ability grouped, it was easy to identify the learning attitudes of children. None looked bored, and all were engrossed in their learning. In the loosely grouped lessons, the children were engaged in their learning, although some needed adult support to achieve this, notably children with obvious special needs. The children I knew to be in the more able group (due to their participation in this study) seemed engaged, and indeed generally took on some sort of leadership role in moving the class' learning forward. In the mixed ability grouped lessons, I could not tell who were

the more able, and therefore cannot comment on their response to the lessons, other than to say that all children appeared engaged in these lessons.

Evidence from documentation

Both the Ofsted Reports of 2010 and 2012 commented that behaviour was good in the school. In 2010, Ofsted reported:

“They behave well and are keen to learn.” (D)

In 2012, it said:

“Pupils around the school are courteous, friendly and respectful of each other and of adults...Most pupils behave well in lessons and have a good attitude to learning.” (D)

On this occasion it specifies it is **most** children behave well, so it appears the inspectors may have seen some of the behaviour that the teachers and children are concerned about. It appears it is still an ongoing issue for the school as the 2013-14 School Improvement Plan listed reviewing and rewriting the behaviour policy as one of the actions for that academic year

Summary

- Behaviour in school is seen as the main obstacle for both some staff members and pupils in delivering better provision for ‘gifted’ pupils
- Lack of time during the school day is seen as another barrier

Participants’ wishes

Evidence from the interview data

Another way employed to explore the obstacles to ideal provision for ‘gifted’ pupils, was to ask participants what they would like to see in their school for ‘gifted education’, if resources were no object, so this section also refers to question 4.

So what did the staff at the school want so that they could provide for ‘gifted’ children in school, in the way that they would like?

Several teachers wanted more training, as they felt they lacked knowledge in this area. Teachers also felt they needed more resources. In terms of practical resources, they wanted banks of resources for teaching in class, ICT resources and more challenging

physical resources in the playground. Mainly, however, they wanted extra adults, to allow more teacher time for the pupils in class, or even peripatetic specialist teachers to deliver lessons to ‘gifted’ children in their domain of excellence. Several participants wanted an even greater range of extra-curricular activities for the children, including more competitive opportunities. Some teachers wanted interventions aimed at gifted children and some wanted ‘gifted’ pupils simply to be proud of their ability and not “downplay” it.

Amongst the child participants, they also wanted more extra-curricular activities, including trips and more enrichment activities in after-school clubs. Several children wanted to see more challenge in lessons, including more problem-solving and investigative activities. Almost all the child participants wanted to see improved behaviour in lessons.

Summary of participant wishes

- Several participants thought provision would be better with more adults involved in teaching ‘gifted’ children and more time devoted to it
- Some teachers wanted to have access to more training and resources to help them to provide for this group of pupils
- Several participants wanted more extra-curricular opportunities, both in terms of trips and clubs in school
- A few participants had some concerns about the effects of labelling, and would like the label to be something children can be proud of
- Some of the children wanted lessons to be more challenging, with more investigative activities, and better behaviour in class

Senior Managers’ Evaluation

Evidence from the interview data

One of the features of the data collection was that most staff members tended to relate their views to their own experience, whereas the three Senior Managers had an overview, and therefore a code was introduced to analyse their evaluations of the school’s performance in ‘gifted education’. Danielle saw this as part of an evaluation of provision for the whole school, particularly as the school prepared for the introduction of the new National Curriculum (2013), which could prove to be an opportunity for ‘gifted’ learners.

She also believed that using benchmark data to track their progress in the area against other schools helped them improve provision.

Stephen believed that only under the present headteacher had ‘gifted and talented’ education been given any kind of priority, because the school has been under so much pressure to raise the achievement of lower ability pupils. Generally teachers were less likely to come to him with issues to do with ‘gifted’ pupils than with pupils with special educational needs. He believed the weakest area for ‘gifted’ children in the school was the humanities, but maths, literacy and sport were well catered for, particularly when the number of extra-curricular opportunities in those areas is taken into account. So much energy is expended by teachers into planning for maths and literacy, in his view, that the humanities subjects do not get sufficient attention, and he would like to see a more exciting, investigative approach applied to these subjects. He also worried about transition to secondary school, as many of their ‘gifted’ pupils are not recognised as such at their secondary schools, when they are part of a different cohort.

Charlotte was more concerned about the fact that their higher attainers appeared to be underachieving (as measured by the Government analysis tool Raise-on-Line). She described it as “obvious, sort of hitting you in the face”, and nearly cost them the ‘good’ rating they received from Ofsted at the last inspection. She believed that everyone in the team wanted to do better with their higher attainers, and extra support was put in with this group.

Evidence from documentation

The evidence from Ofsted and the School Improvement Plan that higher attainers were not making as good progress as other groups has already been discussed.

Summary

- The New Curriculum is seen as an opportunity to review provision for this group of pupils
- ‘Gifted and talented’ policy has a higher profile under the current head-teacher. She is aware that higher attainers are not achieving as well as other pupils, and this has been noted by Ofsted in a 2012 inspection
- One senior manager thought that the humanities were less well catered for,

although thought other areas of the curriculum were well provided for.

Local Authority Support

Although local authority support was not intended as a theme for the research into the school as such, because Chapter 3 explored the role of the Local Authority Adviser in promoting ‘gifted education’ policy, it seemed appropriate to track how the school had evaluated the services provided by her.

Evidence from the interview data

The analysis indicated that senior managers were aware of the support the school had received from the Local Authority Adviser. The school had benefited for many years from the Excellence in Cities funded enrichment courses that the Local Authority Adviser had organised, and were particularly impressed by the range and originality of these courses. The Local Authority had also provided staff training in the past, and the Adviser’s contacts were valued as well as her ideas. In addition, the Local Authority Adviser had come into the school every year to go through the school pupil progress data and challenge the Inclusion Manager on the outcome of this review. Charlotte (senior manager) felt this took some of the pressure off her.

“So I’ll miss her in that respect as well, because in the time that I’ve been almost feeling that the school was beating me, rather than I was leading the school, if you see what I mean, again I could not worry about the number of Level 5s [a grade for 11 year olds which is above age related expectations]” (M, I)

The Local Authority thus appears to have provided a way to focus on higher attainers, when other groups in the school were of more pressing concern. The experience was not always pleasant, as Stephen remarked:

“Very well supported. Yeah. Sometimes a bit harassed even. But in a positive way....because even gifted and talented has been part of my performance management this year, because every year special needs has been such a huge priority” (M, I)

Local Authority support also came from Local Authority School Improvement team. Stephen described the experience of working with the Local Authority Gifted and Talented Adviser and the other Advisers as:

“It’s like an inspection, in a friendly way, when she comes in. But she is so rigorous, and an advocate, that it’s forced our arm” (M, I)

Charlotte summed up the support as being helpful, especially where there was Excellence in Cities money, but this support has now dwindled, as the local authority’s role has been affected by recent government policy.

Main findings from the research

The main findings from the research have been outlined below against the research questions.

1) To what extent have theoretical models of identification and provision for the 'gifted and talented' filtered into the policies within schools and consequently into classroom practice?

- There was a general lack of knowledge about 'gifted education', and very little training either at Teacher Training stage or subsequently as Continued Professional Development.
- Staff were mostly unaware of National Policy, and few had read the school Gifted and Talented Policy.
- The School Policy did not give explicit guidance on 'gifted education', rather general principles.
- Teachers tended to rely on their own theories for identifying and providing for 'gifted' pupils.

2) Has national policy on 'gifted and talented education' impacted on the practice of teachers in the school setting and if so, how is this demonstrated?

- National policies appeared to have raised awareness of the needs of this group of pupils for all the participant groups.
- The school had ensured that there are several extra-curricular opportunities for a range of domains.
- Teachers were aware of the need to differentiate and provide suitable challenge for their 'gifted' pupils but have not done so consistently.
- The school identified 10% of the cohort as 'gifted or talented' as required by the former national policies (particularly 'Excellence in Cities' DfE, 1999), although had not using any criteria systematically

3) What are the attitudes of the staff in the school towards the identification of 'gifted and talented' pupils and making specific provision for them?

- Most participants believed that 'gifted' pupils should be identified and provided for, often because they believed every child has a right to fulfil their

potential

- Some teachers believed that providing for this group may cause other groups of pupils to be neglected, but most believed ‘gifted’ pupils get less attention in class and are relied upon to work independently
- Teachers appeared to believe that appropriate differentiated work should be provided for them, but some teachers disliked ability groups or setting
- Some teachers worried about the impact on other pupils of labelling ‘gifted’ pupils, whereas others worried about the impact on the ‘gifted’ pupils themselves

4) Have there been challenges faced by the school in providing for this group of children, who were selected as a requirement of the policy?

- The main obstacle was lack of knowledge and training, based on empirical research, to guide staff in their provision for this group of pupils
- Lack of resources in school, particularly adult support, was seen as another challenge, although more extra-curricular activities were seen as important
- Poor behaviour was seen as an obstacle by some, particularly the child participants, as was the perceived ability of the cohort the school services
- Lack of time in the school day meant that the staff could not attend to all the tasks they would ideally like to, which including working more with the ‘gifted and talented’ children
- The impact of labelling – some children found it uncomfortable to be labelled ‘gifted’

Chapter 6 discusses the implications of these results, and relates these findings to the research described in Chapters 2 and 3. The importance of this research is then explored in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 6: Discussion

In this chapter, the findings from Chapter 5 are discussed both critically and in relation to the literature review, as well as other recent relevant published work. At the end of Chapter 5, a summary of findings related to the research questions was tabulated (Table 5.14), and this is used as a framework for the discussion in this chapter.

Research Question 1

To what extent have theoretical models of identification and provision for the ‘gifted and talented’ filtered into the policies within schools and consequently into classroom practice?

The main findings suggested that there was a general lack of knowledge about ‘gifted’ education and that staff were mainly unaware of national policy and few had read the school policy on ‘gifted and talented’ education. Policies were based mainly on general principles and teachers therefore tended to rely on their own theories and ideas, mostly using pragmatic strategies.

The Excellence in Cities initiative (DfEE, 1999) placed great emphasis on the identification of ‘gifted’ students, but there was less guidance about provision; leading teachers to rely on extension and extra-curricular activities (also identified by the Local Authority Adviser, in Chapter 3). Nevertheless, identification itself has been shown in this study (chapter 2) to be a very complex process – so complex that some have advocated a very wide sweep (Freeman, 1998; Birch, 2004; Koshy, Portman-Smith and Brown, 2014) to ensure not only fairness, but also potential, not just prior achievement, is tapped.

The findings of this study showed that even where training for Gifted and Talented Co-ordinators (DfES, 2007) advocated research based alternatives, such as checklists, these were still not utilised by teachers, who almost exclusively used prior attainment of ‘gifted and talented’ pupils for selection. Koshy, Pinheiro-Torres and Portman-Smith (2010) also found the process of identifying children for the ‘gifted and talented’ register to be haphazard and pragmatic. In fact, Smithers and Robinson (2012) confirmed this, finding in their interviews with head-teachers and Gifted and Talented Co-ordinators that there

was a lack of clarity on how to identify such pupils, even though this had been made the main thrust of the policy.

A possible reason for this is the way the Strategy was introduced, using what I refer to as “cascade” training – that is, the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinators attended training and it was then their responsibility to “cascade” this training to staff in the school. This wholly depended on the willingness of the head-teacher to give up training time to this topic, and the competence of the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator to do this effectively. The work of Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012) and the Select Committee Report (House of Commons, 2010) demonstrated this as one of many competing policies teachers were expected to implement. In addition, the message given by the Government about the priority of the Strategy can be judged by the resources spent on it, as opposed to the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies where **all** primary school teachers who taught the National Curriculum received training. As a result, these two Strategies became the foundation blocks of the teaching of numeracy and literacy within state schools in England and Wales, whereas the teachers in this study (also a finding in a national study by Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres, 2012) lacked expertise in delivering the Gifted and Talented strategy. It seems the amount of resources spent on a policy may affect its uptake.

In contrast to the USA, where some ‘gifted and talented’ programmes promote psychometric testing as a means of identifying ‘gifted and talented’ students (Feldhusen et al, 2004; Kaufman et al, 2012), the resources in the borough for educational psychology amount to three visits per term for each school. This means that the use of educational psychologists’ time for identifying ‘gifted and talented’ pupils is not a realistic option for this school. The emphasis on identification was, at best, always going to be hit and miss (Ford and Grantham, 2003; Birch, 2004), and therefore probably the wrong focus, a view shared by Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres (2012). They also pointed out that using a percentage based strategy to identify this group of pupils encourages the use of test-based approaches.

Sutherland and Stack (2014) differentiated between a needs-based model, where special help is given to particular groups of students with common difficulties, against which the rest of the school population can be regarded as normal, and a rights-based model, which

does not search for groups different from the majority. They advocated ensuring that education is about challenge for all pupils. More emphasis on provision would not only have been more productive, but may have avoided some of the negative attitudes associated with identification, which have been so harmful to the policy (Radnor, Koshy and Taylor, 2007; Renzulli, 1998; House of Commons, 2010).

Other authors (Smithers and Robinson, 2012; Koshy, Portman Smith and Brown, 2014) have written about the lack of clarity and focus in ‘gifted and talented’ policy in the UK, and there has been concern about the haste in which the policies had been brought in without heed to warnings from leading professionals in the field (House of Commons, 2010, Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres, 2012). As Smithers and Robinson (2012) wrote

“Policy and provision for the highly able in England is in a mess. The Blair and Brown governments attempted a series of initiatives for the gifted and talented”, but each had barely begun before it was ended. The present government has stripped out most of what remained and made some welcome changes to tests and data access” (p.ii)

The lack of guidance about how to provide effectively for ‘gifted’ pupils using evidence-based approaches (e.g. VanTassel-Baska and Wood, 2010; Renzulli and Renzulli, 2012), reveals a lack of rigour and direction, which is reflected in school practice demonstrated within this study.

Without a rigorous training programme, opportunities to reflect or empirically researched models available in the national policies, where were teachers supposed to obtain robust guidance for their own practice? In any event, both the national and school policies had such a low profile (Koshy, Pinheiro-Torres and Portman-Smith, 2010) that most staff were either unaware of them, or had not read them. Combined with a lack of regular training in school, teachers used what they knew about teaching (mostly about differentiation) to try to provide for their pupils the best they could, which leads to Research Question 2.

In terms of the philosophical stances that the teachers took towards intelligence, these also varied. Some teachers took a conservative view (Plomin and Craig, 2001) which could be seen by comments revealing what Dweck described as a fixed state (as

discussed in Chapter 2). Beatrice, for example, said that the school did not get the kind of ‘gifted and talented’ pupils a school in a more affluent area would. Other participants had a more liberal dynamic view of intelligence, believing that working with the pupils and building on their talents is what makes a child ‘talented’ or ‘gifted’. This variation reveals that the teachers are not working within a theoretical model beyond their own personal philosophy.

Training within school had not addressed a basic philosophical stance upon which the policy had been based, resulting in teachers working from different agendas. This is another example of a lack of theoretical framework underlying provision for ‘gifted and talented’ students. A model such as the one described on page 45 by Borland and Wright (2004) may well have provided an effective structure for the school’s approach to the identification and provision for ‘gifted and talented’ pupils.

Research Question 2

Has national policy on ‘gifted and talented education’ impacted on the practice of teachers in the school setting, and if so, how is this demonstrated?

The main findings of the study were that national policies appear to have raised awareness of the needs of this group of pupils, and that both the school and teachers had made efforts to provide opportunities for them, albeit inconsistently across the school. The school adhered to the requirement to identify 10% of their cohort for the ‘gifted and talented’ register, and made provision for the children as they saw appropriate.

All teachers were aware of the need to provide for this group of pupils, and this could be seen as a positive impact of the policy, a finding shared with Koshy, Portman Smith and Brown (2014). Using the model of the national policy, and as had been modelled by the Local Authority, the school had an extensive extra-curricular programme, partly organised by the Local Authority, but also by the school itself. This was highly regarded by all participant groups, and many wanted more. This emphasis was echoed in Chapter 3 by the Local Authority Adviser, who said that schools had always seen the extra-curricular provision as the mainstay of the ‘Excellence in Cities’ (1999) policy, even though it was always intended that classroom provision was the most important element of the policy as pupils spend most of their time in the classroom (Rotigel, 2003).

In fact, Smithers and Robinson (2012) saw the danger of this emphasis on extra-curricular activities, when they stated:

“Other schools have concentrated on out-of-school activities such as master classes, competitions and visits. In some cases, “gifted and talented” appears to have been more of a rationing device for popular trips than a means of high-level education.” (p. ii)

It is true that the school studied did not appear to evaluate the impact of their various extra-curricular activities, and that the provision was seen to be a good thing in itself, rather than as part of a planned strategy of meeting known needs in their more able group. However, the school inspectors Ofsted (2003) found that these activities have had a positive impact on achievement in general. In terms of following a theoretical framework, such as the School-wide Enrichment Model (Renzulli, 1976) or the Integrated Curriculum Model (VanTassel-Baska and Woods, 2010) however, the extra-curricular provision was opportunistic, depending on the resources available within the staff group or what was offered by the local authority.

The school had also taken on the values of identifying gifted and talented pupils over a range of domains and was familiar with the principles, if not the theories, of Gardner (1983). The idea of ‘gifted and talentedness’ being attached to sports and arts as well as academic subjects has been important in the school dispelling ideas that ‘gifted and talented’ policy is about elitism. The 2/3 gifted and 1/3 talented rule meant that academic ‘giftedness’ was clearly favoured, but overall this seems to have contributed to an acceptance of ‘gifted’ policy.

However, when planning which pupils went on trips for ‘gifted’ pupils, little heed was made of domain (with the exception of sports), and, for instance, academically ‘gifted’ children were chosen to go on art trips, even if their area of ‘giftedness’ was science. This possibly contributed to the widespread view that the trips were a reward for good behaviour.

In-class provision has been described as patchy by authors such as Rotigel (2003) and Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres (2012). In this study, all teachers showed awareness of the need to differentiate to provide for ‘gifted’ pupils in class, and most felt they did this

successfully, although parents, pupils and some teaching assistants did not agree that pupils were consistently challenged. Robinson, Campbell and Mazzoli (2006) also found that ‘gifted and talented’ pupils found that provision varied from teacher to teacher and that there was scope for more challenge for them. As early as 1999, Kerry and Kerry (1999) wrote about the lack of guidance available to teachers on how to differentiate, and the findings in this study seem to indicate that this is still the case.

Lesson observations showed that teachers understood that thinking skills were a good way to provide challenge, but pupils spoke of lessons that were more focused on learning facts or revising work already known, which they found less challenging. It is interesting that the new National Curriculum in England (DfE, 2013) has been promoted as more challenging, although much of this is due to a greater emphasis on rote learning of facts at an earlier stage of the pupil’s career. It is unlikely that the higher ability pupils will find such a curriculum more challenging, judging by their views in this study.

Participants did not speak of awareness of any theoretical framework used in planning lessons. Whilst there had been training in Philosophy for Children (Lipman et al, 1980) for teachers in the past, there had been changes in staff and therefore not all staff could deliver this. No participant mentioned Philosophy for Children as a means of providing for the ‘gifted and talented’ pupils in school. Equally, another means of planning for higher ability students is Bloom’s Taxonomy (discussed in chapter 2), and this is a model that is promoted in the Leading Teachers’ Gifted and Talented Training Programme.

Teacher participants did not speak of using Bloom’s Taxonomy to assist their planning, although there was evidence of encouraging higher order thinking skills in some of the lessons observed. Robinson, Campbell and Mazzoli (2006) found a theoretical understanding of pedagogic models in schools associated with ‘gifted and talented’ education, such as higher order thinking skills and multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983), which supports the finding of this study, but also stated that this on its own does not necessarily lead to successful classroom practice. Frequently teachers were observed differentiating by changing the task, sometimes completely, for different groups within their classes, rather than overtly using higher order skills for differentiation. However, Robinson, Campbell and Mazzoli (2006) wrote about the difficulties in knowing what

constitutes ‘advanced’ level work across the curriculum, and how this can be standardised, which contributes to a lack of consistency in teaching the most able pupils.

Whilst school policy advocated differentiation and ability grouping in some subjects, some teachers had a personal objection to organising their class in this way, believing they were able to challenge pupils by organising tasks within mixed ability groups. Although there is a continued debate on this in the literature, this is counter to the evidence from the meta-analyses by Kulik and Kulik (1992) and Rogers (2001) and also the view of VanTassel-Baska and Wood (2010), who all advocated ability groups and substantially differentiated tasks in ensuring that the needs of the most able pupils are met.

The results show that teachers appeared to have the freedom in the school to organise their lessons as they wished, even in contravention of school policy and in the absence of knowledge about evidence-based research in this area. This could be a further reason for the frequently discussed ‘patchiness’ of provision (House of Commons Select Committee, 2010; Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres, 2012; Ofsted 2009).

Research Question 3

What are the attitudes of the staff in the school towards the identification of ‘gifted and talented’ pupils and making specific provision for them?

The main findings for this research question were that most participants believed that ‘gifted and talented’ children should be identified, mainly because they believe every child has a right to reach their potential. There were divided opinions on whether they thought ‘gifted and talented’ provision deprives other children in school, or whether ‘gifted’ pupils are the neglected ones. Some teachers were concerned about the impact of labelling ‘gifted’ pupils – on themselves and the impact on other pupils, although findings by Robinson, Campbell and Mazzoli (2006) indicated that students find the process of identification a positive one, echoed by all the child participants in this study.

Some teachers had some misgivings (as found by Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres, 2012) about focusing on this group of pupils, rather than all pupils. Other participants however (also found by Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres, 2012) welcomed the opportunity to meet the

needs of this group of pupils, who they saw as not being well provided for, as teachers relied on them to work independently while they focused on less able pupils and could rely on their good behaviour.

The government policy 'Every Child Matters' (DCSF, 2003) appears to have had an impact on attitudes amongst the teaching staff, as several teachers quoted that phrase in speaking of their attitude to 'gifted' education – that is, that **all** children have a right to meet their potential. This contrasts with negative attitudes written about in the past (Radnor, Taylor and Koshy, 2007; House of Commons, 2010). Some participants spoke of some staff in school holding ambivalent views, and indeed amongst the participant group, some appeared to have mixed feelings about identifying the group.

However, over a decade after the 'Excellence in Cities' (1999) 'gifted and talented' strand was introduced, it seems that there has been an increasing acceptance of the need to both identify and provide for this group of pupils (Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres, 2012). It appears that it takes a long time to win over hearts and minds, and the lack of clarity in the policy possibly served to extend this period of acceptance. One of the encouraging signs seen in the interviews conducted after all policies had ended, was that it was taken for granted by participants that teachers are expected to provide for 'gifted' pupils, although this is possibly not surprising, given that most participants were unaware of national policy.

Most pupils believed that teachers provided well for this group, although teachers were aware that they were doing this without specific knowledge about how to do so. Some staff admitted that higher ability pupils probably received less teacher time, because they were capable of working independently. There was concern amongst the staff about the low levels of achievement generally in the school and that this was more of a priority; however, as the school improved, as Ofsted has pointed out (2009), there was a need to focus on the higher attainers.

One way to raise achievement generally would be to plan from the 'top down', as recommended by the National Strategy, and by Renzulli (1998), but this was not mentioned by the participants in this study, which is further evidence that there is insufficient theoretical knowledge within the school about the most effective action.

Negative attitudes could have been created when, for example Ofsted, demanded improved targets for higher attainers but the school did not have the necessary toolbox of knowledge and skills to address the issue.

The issue of labelling is controversial. On the one hand it can be seen as promoting elitism (Lowe, 2003; Rotigel, 2003), but on the other hand, there has been some evidence that young people find being thought of high ability ‘uncool’ (House of Commons, 2010; Koshy, Portman Smith and Brown, 2014). Both of these attitudes have been apparent in this study, although in a muted form.

Some teachers seem to have been influenced by the Every Child Matters policy (DCFS, 2003), and whilst some teachers had some reservations, generally the policy was not equated with elitism as has been described elsewhere (Lowe, 2003). This could be that, over time, resistance to the policy broke down as teachers saw the benefits of it. Realising that pupils could be talented across the range of domains may have felt less elitist to them. It should be noted, too, that in this school in an area of deprivation, there is no substantial middle class cohort in the school, which could enhance the feelings that the policy is elitist, as it is known that social class and race is a factor in identification of ‘gifted and talented pupils’ (e.g. Ford and Grantham, 2003; Erwin and Worrall, 2012).

However, views were mixed and one teacher thought the ‘gifted’ pupils could be quite arrogant, and very concerned with their status, whereas other staff spoke of children being embarrassed about people knowing about their ability. Some of the child participants spoke of jealousy by other pupils, which may have been exacerbated by them going on trips. In line with the findings in Koshy, Portman Smith and Brown, (2014), all the participants and their parents were proud of their inclusion in the ‘gifted’ group, and that whatever the teachers and other pupils thought, it was a positive experience for them (a finding confirmed by Robinson, Campbell and Mazzoli (2006).

Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres (2012) identified a further cause of resentment to the labelling process – the term ‘gifted and talented’. As discussed in Chapter 3, many people working in the field (Brady and Koshy, 2013; House of Commons, 2010) found the term a barrier to acceptance of the policy. In the school studied, some participants objected to the term,

but most used the term, interpreting it according to their own theories about ‘gifted and talentedness’. As previously discussed, their views about the fixed state of intelligence (or otherwise) impacted on this (Dweck, 2000). Several participants had commented that “everyone has a special talent”, indicating possibly that they believed all children could achieve more with the right input, or possibly this simply indicates teachers’ discomfort with identifying this group of children, believing it to be ‘elitism’. This has been consistently documented as a concern of teachers in the literature (e.g. Radnor, Koshy and Taylor, 2007; Koshy, Pinheiro-Torres and Portman-Smith, 2010).

Research Question 4

Have there been challenges faced by the school in providing for this group of children, who were selected as a requirement of the policy?

The main findings from the responses to this question are that a lack of knowledge and training were seen as obstacles to implementing the policy, as was a lack of resources. Poor behaviour was also seen as a challenge, particularly by the child participants, as well as lack of time in the school day, and the impact of labelling. Each of these will be discussed.

Lack of knowledge and the impact of labelling have already been explored above in some detail. Issues about the impact of behaviour in classrooms on the education of ‘gifted’ pupils are also echoed in the study of Koshy, Portman Smith and Brown (2014). In this study it was addressed by a few staff and mentioned by most of the child participants as an issue, although there was no evidence of obvious bad behaviour in the school. It appears that one of the classes was particularly challenging, which may have made this a greater issue for this study than it might otherwise have been.

Good behaviour is seen as an attribute of the ‘gifted and talented’ group, which begs the question of whether ‘gifted and talented’ pupils who are badly behaved are not being identified. Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres (2012) found teachers had stereotypes of their images of ‘gifted and talented’ children (“little mad professor” p. 19). Participants were asked about their image of ‘gifted and talented’ pupils in this study, and although none revealed the kinds of stereotypes found by Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres (2012), the references to the good behaviour of this group may be an example of stereotyping.

The issue of lack of resources is interesting, particularly the lack of time. This seems to be because the model of provision is based on a number of extra-curricular opportunities, which of course do have their place and are important, although as previously discussed, are not the only provision needed (Smithers and Robinson, 2012). A different way of organising the teaching of the more able children, such as setting as the school does in maths for Year 6, does not necessarily use more resources – rather it uses existing resources differently.

A clearer theoretical framework for provision may have been very helpful for the school to maximise opportunities for their most able pupils within existing resources. For example, had the school used the framework of the Integrated Curriculum Model (VanTassel-Baska and Wood, 2010), they could have structured their provision in a more systematic way, setting may then have occurred in other subjects, especially in literacy.

VanTassel-Baska and Wood et al write of the need to differentiate substantially for ‘gifted’ pupils. I observed this in maths lessons in Year 6 where classes were set in ability groups, but many teachers spoke of differentiating more by outcome for literacy (and barely at all for other subjects). Acceleration is an area considered important by writers such as Renzulli (2010) and VanTassel-Baska and Wood (2010), but has not really been spoken about in the interviews with teachers. The school Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator viewed enrichment activities as being the main thrust of extra-curricular provision, as seen in an interview with a parent recounting a conversation with the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator, who told her that the school did not teach the Key Stage 3 curriculum (the curriculum from the start of secondary school), but concentrated on enrichment activities. It would be possible to improve provision within the classroom by a different focus of class organisation and planning, with minimal call for extra resources. However, this would require substantial training for all staff which has seen to be lacking (Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres, 2012), and has resource implications in itself.

Ring-fenced resources, such as used in the ‘Excellence in Cities’ (DfEE, 1999) initiative, do give an important message about the importance of a policy, and undoubtedly well-targeted resources would provide a more enriching learning experience for the more able pupils in school but, without a clear focus, there is no guarantee that such money would make a difference. It could be argued that the

money spent on ‘gifted education’ during this initiative was not utilised fully, as many schools were operating from a point of lack of knowledge (Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres, 2012) or not being in sympathy with the policy (Radnor, Koshy and Taylor, 2007). Undoubtedly, the resources given to this school have been welcomed, and been used to provide a variety of extra-curricular opportunities for the pupils in a range of domains.

The local authority trips were highly regarded by pupils and parents. Partly this could have been because the pupils received letters about these trips and this was one way they knew they were identified as ‘gifted and talented’, something that both pupils and parents were proud of. Pupils were not necessarily chosen for trips because of their domain of ‘talent’, and there was a general view that the trips were a reward for good behaviour rather than part of a plan to provide more able pupils opportunities that would not otherwise be possible.

However, as was seen in Chapter 3, the Ofsted Report (2003) indicated the importance of extra-curricular activities in providing opportunities that were not available in schools. Some pupils could describe ways in which their ‘gifts’ and ‘talents’ had been developed through these opportunities. However, if the strategy had given clearer guidance on provision, particularly within the school day, and training had been given to all teachers, in line with the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy, a more consistent picture of provision may have resulted.

Summary

Many of the findings have indicated that ‘gifted and talented’ policies failed to use either a theoretical framework or empirical research as their foundation, and that this was translated into the local authority to some extent, and certainly into the school context. The staff in the school came to believe that ‘gifted and talented’ pupils need to be identified and provided for, but used their own theories and experience to do this, rather than have a clear understanding and vision as a staff group as to how to achieve a shared aim. Reference has been made to the patchy provision following the introduction of this policy (e.g. House of Commons Select Committee, 2010), and this seems to be mirrored in the provision inside this school.

Chapter 7 draws conclusions from the findings of this study, and discusses the unique contribution it makes to the literature in this area, as well as making recommendations for future practice and research.

CHAPTER 7: Conclusions

The aim of this research was to explore the impact of all the ‘gifted and talented’ initiatives that have been put in place in the UK since 1999 in a primary school in an inner-city area, to determine the success of these policies and explore the direction future policies in ‘gifted and talented’ policies. As has been discussed in Chapter 3, prior evaluation of the initiatives has been piecemeal and sparse, and mainly focused on the first initiative – the ‘Excellence in Cities’ (DfEE, 1999) policy. This study looks at the period beyond the end of ‘Excellence in Cities’ as well, when the National Strategy (DCSF, 2007) became policy, as well as into the period after the end of the National Strategy when there was no policy. It was therefore important to evaluate whether or not the policies had been effective, and whether there was a continued need for further ‘gifted and talented’ policy in the future.

Conclusions of the findings of this study

Table 7.0 Relationship between research questions, themes and main findings

Research Question	Themes from the findings arising from each question	Main findings
1. To what extent have theoretical models of identification and provision for the ‘gifted and talented’ filtered into the policies within schools and consequently into classroom practice?	Knowledge In school provision Outside provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There was a general lack of knowledge about ‘gifted’ education, and very little training either at Teacher Training stage or subsequently as Continued Professional Development. ● Staff were mostly unaware of National Policy, and few had read the school Gifted and Talented Policy. ● The School Policy did not give explicit guidance on ‘gifted’ education, rather general principles. ● Teachers tended to rely on their own theories for identifying and providing for ‘gifted’ pupils.
2. Has national policy on ‘gifted and talented’ education impacted on the practice of teachers in the school setting and if so, how is this demonstrated?	Knowledge In school provision Outside provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National policies appeared to have raised awareness of the needs of this group of pupils for all the participant groups. ● The school had ensured that there are several extra-curricular opportunities for a range of domains. ● Teachers were aware of the need

		<p>to differentiate and provide suitable challenge for their 'gifted' pupils but have not done so consistently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The school identified 10% of the cohort as 'gifted or talented' as required by the former national policies (particularly Excellence in Cities, 1999), although were not using any criteria systematically.
<p>3. What are the attitudes of the staff in the school towards the identification of 'gifted and talented' pupils and making specific provision for them?</p>	<p>In school provision Outside provision Identification Participants' attitudes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most participants believed that 'gifted' pupils should be identified and provided for, often because they believed every child has a right to fulfil their potential ● Some teachers believed that providing for this group may cause other groups of pupils to be neglected, but most believed 'gifted' pupils get less attention in class and are relied upon to work independently ● Teachers appeared to believe that appropriate differentiated work should be provided for them, but some teachers disliked ability groups or setting ● Some teachers worried about the impact on other pupils of labelling 'gifted' pupils, whereas others worried about the impact on the 'gifted' pupils themselves
<p>4. Have there been challenges faced by the school in providing for this group of children, who were selected as a requirement of the policy?</p>	<p>Challenges Participant wishes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The main obstacle was lack of knowledge and training, based on empirical research, to guide staff in their provision for this group of pupils ● Lack of resources in school, particularly adult support, was seen as another challenge, although more extra-curricular activities were seen as important ● Poor behaviour was seen as an obstacle by some, particularly the child participants, as was the perceived ability of the cohort the school services ● Lack of time in the school day ● The impact of labelling – some children found it uncomfortable to be labelled 'gifted'

Table 7.0 relates the themes arising from the data to the research questions, and what the main findings were from these. The themes relate to the main issues that emanated from the interviews.

Knowledge

Knowledge related to the extent that participants felt knowledgeable about teaching ‘gifted and talented’ children and the National and School Policies in this area. The findings demonstrated that there was widespread agreement that teachers and other members of staff felt they had received insufficient training in teaching this group of pupils and had even less knowledge about the content of the National Policy. It has been suggested in Chapter 6 that this is because the National Strategy for Gifted and Talented Education (2007) was given a much lower profile than other national strategies, such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Equally, the ‘Excellence in Cities’ (DfEE, 1999) strategy only applied to some parts of the UK, and therefore was perhaps of interest to a limited audience.

The findings also showed that even if the participants had been familiar with the National Policies, they would have found that they focused primarily on identification of the cohort (a process that has been seen in Chapter 2 to be very complex and inaccurate e.g. Birch, 2004), giving very little guidance on provision. The strategy of dissemination of the policy was to train a lead teacher in the school who would ‘cascade’ training to other members of staff – a procedure that allowed inconsistency in training across schools. However, the policies had resulted in a raised awareness of the needs of ‘gifted’ pupils, and this has been a sign of positive impact of the policy, also found by Koshy, Portman-Smith and Brown (2014).

In School Provision

A major part of the evidence participants wanted to give in regards to ‘gifted’ education was a description of what they provided or received in the classroom. This was important, as there has been concern about the reliance of extra-curricular activities as the main source of provision for this group (e.g. Smithers and Robinson, 2012).

Teachers frequently used ability grouping to allow them to differentiate effectively for the most able pupils, although some did not, and where this arrangement was not put in place, the needs of ‘gifted and talented’ pupils appeared to be less well-catered for, a finding shared by Kulik and Kulik (1992) and Rogers (2001). Differentiation based on principles of acceleration was the main strategy, using objectives from the National Curriculum from the next year group for example, although some teachers had some understanding of ways to provide enrichment.

There was a disparity between teachers’ perceptions of the challenge they provided for pupils and the view of parents and pupils. Where teachers felt they provided consistent challenges for their pupils, pupils and parents did not feel there was sufficient challenge all the time, although overall they felt that the school had helped pupils to develop their ‘gifts’ and ‘talents’.

Outside provision

The school studied had a full programme of extra-curricular activities, some of which was provided by specialists, especially in sports. They also made full use of the opportunities organised by the Local Authority Adviser, using Excellence in Cities (DfEE, 1999) funding, although participants were not selected specifically for each activity. The benefit of this was not entirely clear or transparently evaluated, however, and this may be partly due to lack of knowledge on the part of the school, as also found by Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres, (2012).

Identification

Staff used the school policy to identify ‘gifted and talented’, although mainly used performance as a criteria for selecting pupils, whilst holding different personal theories as to what constitutes a ‘gifted’ child. Attitudes towards identifications varied, with some finding it a positive process (as found by Robinson, Campbell and Mazzoli, 2006), whilst others were less comfortable with this, (as found by Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres, 2012). The term ‘gifted and talented’ was problematic for some of the participants, as has been found previously (Radnor, Koshy and Taylor, 2007; House of Commons Select Committee, 2010).

Participants' Attitudes

As well as more positive attitudes from teachers to identification of 'gifted and talented' than has been found in some other studies, most participants in this study had a positive attitude towards 'gifted and talented' policy, which differs from the findings of some other writers (e.g. Radnor, Koshy and Taylor, 2007) although there were some teachers who reflected some of the views uncovered by Radnor et al.

Challenges and Participant Wishes

These two themes found different ways to identify the difficulties participants had found in either implementing the policy or in accessing it. Predictably, many participants had cited a lack of resources (implying not enough money was being spent in this area which counters some of the previous findings of elitism found by Radnor et al, 2007). Many staff participants found lack of knowledge a challenge, and the policies missed an opportunity to guide teachers more clearly to make appropriate provision for 'gifted' pupils. In line with Koshy, Portman-Smith and Brown (2014), behaviour was also seen as a challenge to delivering the policy, especially by the child participants.

Unique contribution of this research to knowledge

There has been a serious shortage of research and evaluation of the 'gifted and talented' policy in England and in the United Kingdom in general. Although small scale, this study attempts to address this, by gathering data about the implementation of the policy and its impact at different levels. It looks at policy guidelines and general literature outlining requirements from practitioners, in a Local Authority and in a school. The data gathered through the authentic voices of the LA Adviser and the school's Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator, parents, pupils, teaching assistants, senior management as well as teachers builds up a picture, which provides a significant contribution in regard to the state of policy and practice in 'gifted and talented' education in the UK.

The findings of this study contribute to the history of the development of 'gifted and talented education' in England, in that the decade 2000-2011 has been one of intense activity and turbulence. Whilst direct comparisons cannot be made, both international and national educators might find this study interesting and useful for comparisons of

policies and practices, in the way writers such as Bassey (1999) have suggested case studies findings could be used for. As most countries are designing policies to nurture ‘gifts’ and ‘talents’, they may be interested in the ‘gifted and talented’ initiatives in the UK, both for their strengths and possible shortcomings.

The study highlights a number of themes for future development and future research for the government, academics and practitioners in schools. New questions have arisen from the study as data that was collected have been in-depth and focused, albeit using a small sample.

The ‘gifted and talented’ policy highway in England is at a crossroads – government policies and in-built support have been withdrawn. Schools are expected to demonstrate effective provision for their high ability children. Through dissemination, I intend to highlight the state of policy and its implications, which will hopefully contribute to the debate on how best we can develop our young people’s particular ‘gifts and talents’ so that they will become successful, balanced and fulfilled citizens in the globally competitive environment they find themselves in.

By looking at one school in depth, gaps in past approaches have been revealed, as have reasons why this may be so. A case study, though small scale, involving the Local Authority, child participants and parents, as well as non-teaching staff and teaching assistants, is a unique feature of this research, allowing their real voices to be heard, and giving a 360° view. It has revealed the different views of pupils and parents at the school compared with the teachers, for example, on how well in-class provision is delivered. Pupils do not feel as challenged as teachers think they are. Another major finding of this study is the teaching staff’s ignorance about a policy that was in existence for more than a decade, indicating the level of importance it was given in school. This study has compared the government’s method of delivering this policy to schools compared with other National Strategies, and seen this one appears to be given less priority, which has been reflected in schools.

However, a champion of the policy has been the Local Authority Adviser, and another unique feature of this study is the exploration of the local authority’s role in promoting the Gifted and Talented Strand of the ‘Excellence in Cities’ (DfEE, 1999)

policy, as well as the subsequent National Strategy. This has been illuminating, in that it has revealed the great importance of this role in implementing government policy and providing knowledge to schools, which was otherwise lacking.

There have been some evaluations of the Gifted and Talented Strand of 'Excellence in Cities' (DfEE, 1999) by Ofsted (2001; 2003; 2009) and others (e.g. Pocklington et al, 2002) commissioned by the government, but there are few academic research studies evaluating the impact of the policy as well as the period after. Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres (2014) and Koshy, Portman-Smith and Brown (2014) are two studies that have looked at this, and the findings of this study provide corroboration to some of their findings, particularly in relation to the lack of emphasis on provision in the policy.

The findings of my research should offer directions for policy makers, researchers and practitioners, both in the UK and abroad, to reflect on the outcomes of a government education initiative designed to make effective provision for the 'gifted and talented' pupil.

Evaluation of methodology

The methodology of this study was guided by my philosophical stance as a constructivist. Therefore the methods I have used have been qualitative, and this has resulted in the depth of enquiry that I had hoped for. I have been able to explore participants' motivations and philosophical positions to gain an understanding of both individuals' views and how these combine to form the ethos towards 'gifted and talented' pupils in school, and the way they are subsequently provided for in school.

My participant group was chosen by the role the participant had in school, as presented in Table 4.3, and further to this, amongst the possible participants I interviewed the members of staff who volunteered to participate in this study. This followed the ethical guidelines I set for myself in Chapter 4, but always leaves the question of what I would have found out from people who did not volunteer. Did they not do so because they were 'anti gifted and talented initiatives' and felt they should not comment? It could, of course, have been that they were too busy, or did not want to make the commitment of time. However, that remains unknown.

I hoped to get data from a number of sources, in order to build a complete as possible a picture, but I am aware there is a great imbalance between the different data sources, with interviews being the more prominent data source by far. In retrospect, I could have asked to specifically observe the child participants – perhaps not on 1:1 basis, but as a group in class, and this would have yielded more data. I did observe some of them whilst observing teachers, but the focus was on the teachers. I could have given more attention to their responses if I had made them the observation focus.

One of my methods of validating my data was to ask participants to read the transcripts of their interviews and confirm that this was a true record of what was said. Many participants did not do this – the child participants were the most conscientious, sometimes adding to the transcript what they had not thought of at the time. I was unprepared for such a low return rate- less than 50% of participants ‘reported back’, and therefore did not have a strategy. Should I have pursued them more? I already felt that I had taken up a great deal of their time and goodwill, so I opted not to do this. I think many may have been overwhelmed by the sheer volume of an interview transcript, and in future I would prepare the participants better beforehand, and maybe even offer some sort of inducement to read and confirm this.

I am pleased I used N-Vivo for my analysis, although as this was my first time of using the software, I am not sure that I maximised the possibilities for analysis using it, which I would like to explore in the future now I feel more confident with the basic use. ‘Misfiling’ was a problem analysing so much data – something that I had to correct when I was writing up the results – and I would find better to ways to check that data had been filed under the correct codes when entering the data. Fortunately, I knew the data and coding well enough to spot these mistakes and correct them in this study.

I have learned a lot about analysing data. Almost every item of data was coded, leading to some codes with insufficient data, which could not therefore be used. Once the main themes had emerged (the parent nodes), I should have had the confidence to only create the child nodes relating to them, and leave the data that was not relevant to the main themes of enquiry. Having completed the analysis, I understand that the main themes emerged quite early on, and dealing with less irrelevant data would have

streamlined the analysis process, and focused on data related to the research questions. As this was my first attempt at analysing such a large amount of data, I was very cautious with the data, initially giving it all equal weight. In future, I would be far more guided by the research questions – whether this item was going to help answer these questions, or it is answering another question.

Even though less than 50% of participants responded to my request for them to check their interview transcript, the ones that did so confirmed that their transcript was accurate. It may well be that other participants read their transcript, but did not reply to me because they had no problem with the interview. On the sample returned to me, I feel confident that the transcripts did reflect the interviews accurately, and that the analysis therefore was based on validated data.

I had confidence in the codes used, where there were several participants with views in the same area, which was most of the codes. There was an issue, as described in Chapter 5, where participants did not refer to the points others made, which does not give the researcher or the reader an idea of what they do think of this issue. Therefore, in the results chapter, sometimes it appears that only a few participants believe something, but this does not imply others did not agree with it. One of the issues with a semi-structured interview was that I was able to lead the participants to talk about the area I was interested in, but I had less control about the points they made about this than I would have had in a structured interview. Nevertheless, the freedom the semi-structured interview gave the participants to explore the issues important to them, is of greater benefit than forcing the discussion down one line for the sake of a neat set of data, in my view.

Limitations of this study

One of the limitations is the small scale of the study. By choosing the case study methodology, there were intrinsic limitations to the study, which were outlined in chapter 4. One of the chief limitations is the generalisability of the research, and this is discussed next.

There were, of course, limitations to the numbers I could interview, in order to complete the study in a timely way and not inconvenience the school more than was

necessary, but an interesting line of enquiry that emerged was from the two children who were ‘talented’, rather than ‘gifted’, and how they viewed the children who went on the ‘gifted trips’. Another dimension could have been to look at the attitudes towards ‘gifted and talented’ children, not just from the ‘gifted and talented’ children, but from some ‘non-gifted and talented’ participants too. Perhaps the ‘gifted’ children were identified as a result of teachers’ subjective choice, which is also a limitation of the study, as I had no other means of identifying the ‘gifted’ cohort than from the pupils already identified by the school.

Another limitation was the lack of documentary and observational evidence in comparison to the interview data. This meant that there was a lack of balance between the different sources of evidence, which was provided fewer opportunities for corroborating the evidence than I had initially hoped. However, the richness and amount of interview data compensated for this for the most part.

In chapter 4, the issue of reflexivity was discussed. A limitation of this is that, although it has been borne in mind that participants may say or do things that they would otherwise not in the presence of a researcher, the researcher cannot know exactly what these differences are. Whilst participants came to know me better as I spent more time in the school, they would not have been able to have ignored the scrutiny that a researcher interviewing or observing them would inevitably bring.

Boundaries and generalisability of the research

As a Case Study, this study has looked specifically at one school, which, of course, has its own unique culture and ethos. The main impression that this study left me with was that in this school, the staff and pupils had, in the main, embraced ‘gifted and talented’ policy, despite a lack of knowledge of what this constituted, and that they had attempted to provide for a range of domains in different ways. There was a commitment to this group of pupils.

Could this be the same for other schools? Firstly, I had chosen a school that had benefited from funding and inclusion in the policy from the start of ‘Excellence in Cities’ (DfEE, 1999). This meant that this policy had been a part of the school’s culture since 1999 – unlike schools that were not beneficiaries of the ‘Excellence in

Cities' funding. This may make a difference between schools. However, findings in the literature, particularly the more recent papers (Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres, 2012; Koshy, Pinheiro-Torres and Brown, 2014) have shown similar findings to many of this study, indicating that there may well be generalisability in the findings of this study, as described as "fuzzy generalisations" by Bassey (1999, p.115), and achieves, to some extent, Yin's (2009) analytic generalisation, described on page 103 where two or more cases support the same theory. Whilst Koshy et al's work (2012; 2014) does not use the Case Study method, their findings remain broadly in line with this study. This is a change from earlier work, such as Radnor, Koshy and Taylor (2007), where a more negative attitude to the policy was found, indicating perhaps that the longer the policy was in existence, the more attitudes towards it changed.

On pages 101, the views of Cohen and Manion (2011) were discussed, where they referred to Case Studies allowing a "step to action" (p. 292), as they are embedded in the real world, and therefore can be used for education policy making or staff development. A key finding of this study has been the lack of knowledge that participants had of 'gifted and talented' policy, and the fact that this school is in this situation despite a positive attitude to the policy. This certainly would provide a 'step to action' for the school, but also to policy makers who would surely expect policies to be disseminated effectively in schools. In this case, it seems unlikely that this school is the only one who have insufficient knowledge about 'gifted' education (indeed this has been confirmed by Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres, 2012), and therefore this could be a 'step to action' for others outside the school.

However, it must be recognised that even though the Case Study has many strengths, it has some limitations in terms of generalisability, as a stand-alone study. It needs to be seen in the context of literature in this area, and the validity of the study of **this** school at the time the research took place. Nevertheless, I believe that the findings could reflect the views of teachers in similar schools.

Therefore the main contribution of this research is to highlight the difficulties for the government in ensuring effective implementation of policies devised in Whitehall for an individual school, where there has been little involvement of practitioners in the process. Equally, there appears to be a difficulty in teachers accessing evidence-based

research, from what has been seen in this study, although more guidance on this in the policies would have been an opportunity to assist this. Lack of knowledge, rather than unwillingness, has been the main impediment to better provision, although the school has attempted to make as comprehensive provision as it could within the limits of its knowledge and resources. In the face of lack of knowledge, teachers applied their own theoretical frameworks to teaching this group of children, and generally felt they challenged their pupils.

As a result of the Case Study method, it was possible to find out what the parents and pupils thought about levels of challenge, and the outcome of this was, although they felt the school was developing their ‘gifts’ and ‘talents’ generally, this was not always the case and opportunities to do so were being missed.

Attitudes towards the policy were generally positive, which differs from findings from some other studies as described above. I have proposed that the reason for this is that it takes time to change hearts and minds, and that policies that challenge teachers’ attitudes, such as this one, need more time to embed to allow for this. As it was, the policies were subject to rapid changes, and were probably withdrawn too early, particularly for the schools that were not recipients of ‘Excellence in Cities’ (DfEE, 1999) funding. For these schools, there were only two years before the commencement of the National Strategy (DfES, 2007) until the announcement of its demise in 2009.

Implications

Firstly I present the issues that came out this study, followed by a discussion of the wider implications and what needs now to be done.

- Government policy needed to be more carefully disseminated, especially as the local authority tier is being removed, which was seen to be the most effective means for implementing this policy
- Too many initiatives made it difficult for schools to ensure all policies were given the attention they require
- Government policy needed to give guidance about evidence-based research on effective practice as teachers are unlikely to access this without that kind of support

- Without the support of government policy and resources, it is unlikely that ‘gifted and talented’ education will flourish and develop, especially without the support of the Local Authority Adviser role
- It takes time for schools and teachers to change their practice, and therefore new policies need to take this into account
- Schools need to focus less on identification of pupils, creating more opportunities for a wider range of pupils to explore their domain of ‘gift’ or ‘talent’, before ensuring appropriate provision is put in place
- Schools also need to be aware of acceleration as a strategy, and include curriculum compacting (VanTassel-Baska, 2010)
- Funding should be available to continue ‘master-class’ provision in all domains for the most ‘gifted’ across a number of schools, as schools cannot always challenge their most able pupils across all domains (Huxtable, 2003; House of Commons Select Committee, 2010)

It is clear from this study that as a result of the lack of dissemination of information during the period of the policy through national guidelines, teachers remain unaware of how to meet the needs of ‘gifted and talented’ pupils. Whilst a significant amount of money was given to the policy initially, this was still considerably less than was earmarked for other strategy policies. Teachers’ knowledge is a key feature of the ‘five component model’ by VanTassel-Baska (2009), where preparation of personnel is one of the five components of effective provision for ‘gifted’ pupils. She also refers to attributes that good quality provision should have, and these include clarity and a basis in the research. These attributes were missing from the English ‘gifted and talented’ policy.

In addition, different strands of the ‘gifted and talented’ policy were rushed through and changed before they were embedded, which was a further reason for insufficient provision for this group. The focus on identification, rather than provision, meant that schools directed their efforts there, rather than on subsequent provision. However, many teachers felt a moral obligation to provide as well for this group as they would any other, and tried to do their best to fulfil this. They clearly need support to achieve this, through a well-orchestrated training programme devised using evidence based research.

It is difficult to see, in the present circumstances, who will be able to provide vision and knowledge to schools. Without the conduit of the local authority, who now have a diminishing role, other ways will have to be found to reach school leaders, who would need to lead in promoting ways to support more able pupils. Consideration, therefore, needs to be given to finding ways to address school leaders directly, using their own forums, such as headteachers' conferences.

It is clear from this study, and successive Ofsted reports (Ofsted 2001; 2003; 2009; 2013) and The Sutton Trust report (Smithers and Robinson, 2012), that 'gifted and talented' pupils continue to be insufficiently challenged in English schools. Any further provision for this group of pupils needs to be delivered through delivery of challenging tasks for all pupils and not just high achieving ones, which is connected to the everyday curriculum. However, it is still important that teachers are aware of what constitutes effective provision for 'gifted and talented' pupils, as they are consistently being identified as a group that is not achieving as well as they should.

The government policy "Personalised Learning" (DfES, 2005) indicated that the government wants all pupils to reach their potential, but it has not helped teachers understand what this requires, particularly for the most able pupils in their class. This work still needs to be done, using a model of provision that works in English schools. Models from the USA, whilst very comprehensive, tend to be very resource intensive and requiring expertise, such as Educational Psychologist support. Developing a simple and achievable model that uses provision as the driving force, and which could be adapted easily by all types of school in England, would be a helpful next step.

Further Research

One of the questions that I have been asking from early on in this study has been "If this is the situation for schools, which have had funding and support to bring in 'gifted and talented' education, then how have schools who were only directed by the National Strategy and therefore had none of these resources?" I think a priority would be to investigate schools in suburban and rural locations, which were guided only by the National Strategy, and therefore have had eight fewer years to develop provision.

How does this compare with the practice of the inner-city schools, such as the one studied here? What have been, if any, the benefits and shortcomings?

English schools need a model that bears in mind the resources available for this area of education at present. Devising an evidence-based programme offering a comprehensive framework for provision along the lines of the School-wide Enrichment Model (Renzulli and Renzulli, 2010) or the Integrated Curriculum Model (VanTassel-Baska and Wood, 2010), would allow schools to access good practice in an economic way.

More research is needed to confirm and further explore findings from this study, particularly where new issues have emerged. In a few years, the abyss of no policy will need to be evaluated, to determine how these pupils have been provided for, without the support of government direction. Will schools maintain provision now their consciousness has been raised to the needs of this group, as expected by Ofsted and the government, or will they take the opportunity to worry about one less thing? The long-term needs of this group of pupils appear to be in peril at the time of writing.

Do the needs of this group need to be addressed in any special way? The findings of this study, from the literature to the participants, suggest that they do, otherwise, as Pavla, a teacher participant, put it, *“It is just a terrible waste”*. Society relies on talented people to solve the challenges of the next generation, and it is important that children from socially deprived areas have as much opportunity to develop their ‘gifts’ and ‘talents’ as children who have much more support at home. The beginning of this study began with the quotation from Benjamin Franklin:

“Hide not your talents. They for use were made. What's a sundial in the shade?”

I conclude with this thought. Everybody should be encouraged to use their talents, to contribute to the future generation's world to the best of their ability. There are too many difficult problems in the world to leave out a single person who could possibly find solutions. The process for this starts at school.

GLOSSARY

Academy – A school that is directly funded by the government education department, and not under local authority control

Borough – an administrative area in London, which is divided into 32 areas (boroughs)

CFBT –Centre for British Teachers – an Education trust that, at one point, held the national contract to provide resources for teachers of gifted and talented pupils

DfEE – (Department for Education and Employment) the government department responsible for education, also known at different times as **DfE** (Department for Education), **DCSF** (Department for Children, Schools and Families)

Early Years Foundation Stage – Early Years Foundation Stage – includes Nursery and Reception Classes. This phase has its own curriculum, which is not the National Curriculum.

English as an Additional Language – pupils for whom English is not their first language

Floor targets – a minimum target set by the government for schools to achieve in Year 6 SATs results (see SATs)

G and T – abbreviation for gifted and talented

HMI – Her Majesty’s Inspectorate - another tier of inspections systems in the UK

Labour Party – left of centre political party in the UK

Local authorities (LA) - also **known as LEAs (local education authorities)** the next tier of government in the UK, below national government. Has historically had an important role in education policy, but following the election of the coalition government in 2010, their influence and power is dwindling due to education reforms

Liberal Democrats – a centrist political party in the UK

NAGTY – National Academy of Gifted and Talented Youth – a national project set up at the University of Warwick to provide nationally for gifted and talented secondary school students nationally

National Curriculum- The curriculum set out by the government for all state schools to teach. These include **attainment targets** which outline the learning that should be the outcome (tested by the SATs in English and maths). Superseded in September 2014 by the New Curriculum.

Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education – the body responsible for school inspections in England

Primary school – schools in England that take children ages rising 5 – 11 years of age

SATs – Standard Assessment Tests – National tests and assessment tasks for 7 and 11 year olds in English and maths. Year 2 (7 year olds) are expected to achieve a minimum of Level 2, and 11 year olds a minimum of Level 4. Level 5 and Level 6 are above the level expected of 11 year olds.

Years 1-6 – in England, children start school in the September before their 5th birthday in reception class. Year 1 is for 5-6 years olds, Year 2 for 6-7 year olds, Year 3 for 7-8 year olds, Year 4 for 8-9 year olds, Year 5 for 9-10 year olds and Year 6 for 10- 11 year olds.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Description of Participants

Senior Managers

Charlotte – Charlotte is headteacher and an experienced senior manager, having been at the school approximately 6 years at the time of interview, following a number of other roles as a senior leader in other schools. Teaching has been her only career, and she was planning her retirement in the near future at the time of interview.

Danielle – Danielle came to the school to be the deputy headteacher during the data collection period of this research, and therefore had only been at the school for a short time when she was interviewed. She was very much in the settling in period, and therefore her responses were more about her personal philosophy, rather than a deep understanding of the structures of the school.

Stephen – Stephen had worked at the school for many years, beginning as a part-time Section 11 teacher (working with children for whom English was their second language), and had taken on increasing responsibility as well as hours, until becoming a member of the Senior Management Team and Inclusion Manager. He was trained in teaching gifted and talented children.

Teachers

Sarah – Sarah began teaching in 1976, although has not taught continuously in that time. She had been at this school for 8 years at the time of interview. She works mainly in KS1 and Early Years and is a Middle Manager with line management responsibility.

Peter – Peter had been teaching for ten years at the time of interview, and specialised in early intervention for children with difficulties in maths and supporting teachers and teaching assistants in teaching maths.

Faith – Faith had been at the school for about 18 years and was a middle manager specialising in teaching children with reading difficulties. She now works part-time.

Dawn – Dawn had been a teacher for 3 years at the time of interview and had been at the school for two years.

Melanie – Melanie had been teaching for 6 years and was an Advanced Skills Teacher. Her area of responsibility was creative learning.

Naheed – Naheed had been at the school for 4 years and was a middle manager in the school.

Celia – Celia had worked at the school for 8 years at the time of interview. She has had a number of roles within the school, but did not have a middle management position. The mother of young children, she worked part-time.

Pavla – Pavla was from Eastern Europe and had trained as a teacher there, as well as working as a social worker. She had come to the school as a Learning Mentor, and had worked for 6 years in that capacity, before taking on a teaching role.

Jessica – Jessica was in her third year as a teacher at the time of interview, having come as a Newly Qualified teacher in Key Stage 2.

Beatrice – Beatrice is a middle manager in the school, with the role of assessment co-ordinator. She teaches Key Stage 1.

Teaching Assistants

Tom – Tom had been at the school at the time of interview. He had originally started as a midday meals supervisor, having worked in an after-school club at another

school. He was working as a Teaching Assistant in Year 6 in the mornings and in the afternoons teaching PE, as he has coaching qualifications. He also runs a number of after-school opportunities for the children in the school, including very successful teams for a variety of sports, which are very successful in local authority leagues.

Natalie - Natalie was a Learning Mentor and also led the social and emotional interventions in the school. She was an established member of staff within the school.

Kelly – Kelly was a teaching assistant in Naheed’s class, who also worked as a midday meals supervisor and ran the Breakfast Club.

Pupils

Selina – Selina was a Year 6 pupil of Lithuanian heritage. She is academically gifted as well as having been selected for an art project that takes children from primary school and continues through secondary school.

Delia – Delia was a Year 5 pupil of African heritage. She was both academically gifted and talented at sports.

Olu – Olu was a Year 5 pupil of African heritage, who was talented at sports, rather than academically gifted.

Frederick – Frederick was the son of the Inclusion Manager, and in Year 6. He was very gifted at maths and was having individual tuition with the headteacher to work on Level 6 work (an exceptionally high standard.)

Wei Ling – Wei Ling was a year 6 boy of Chinese heritage, who was particularly strong on maths, but for whom English was an additional language, which meant his literacy standards were not on a par with his maths.

Shaai – Shaai was a Year 5 girl of Sri Lankan heritage. She was academically gifted and talented in sports also.

Adele – Adele was a white British girl from Year 5. She was academically gifted all round, although her writing was exceptionally strong.

Tobi – Tobi was a Year 6 boy of African heritage, who was mainly talented at sports, particularly football, and he had been selected to play for the district team outside of school.

Parents

Shaai's mother – Shaai's mother came over from Sri Lanka 15 years ago at the time of interview, and has 2 children – Shaai is the younger child. She is not confident in her use of English and was studying English to improve it.

Adele's Mother – Adele's mother had lived in the area, in which the school is situated, her entire life. She had two children – Adele is the eldest. She worked as a GP receptionist and was a governor at the school previously.

Selina's mother – Selina's mother came from Lithuania, and has three children, of which Selina is the second child. She is also self-conscious about her English, but has stopped having lessons through ill health. She was hoping to start a fashion business from home the following year, as she has studied fashion at college.

Appendix 2

Semi-structured interview

Questions for teachers

T1) Do you know if there is a school policy on gifted and talented education?

Have you read it?

What do you think of it?

Do you feel supported to do it?

T2) Do you identify gifted and talented children and put them on a register?

If yes:

How do you go about doing this?

What are your thoughts about the process of identification?

If no: go onto next question

T3) What is your idea of a gifted and talented child? Explain your image of it as you see it.

Do you have any thoughts about it?

T4) Do you make special provision for gifted and talented (more able / higher ability – use terminology that has been identified as preferred in question 2) children?

If yes – How do you do this?

What kinds of provision do you make?

Could you give an example?

Do you make provision in all subjects?

What organisational structures do you use?

If no – why not?

T5) What do you know about government policy for the gifted and talented?

T6) If you could have a wish list for gifted and talented, what would be your 3 wishes?

Semi-structured interviews

Questions for managers (including GATCO and link governor)

M1) Do you know if there is a school policy on gifted and talented education?

Have you read it?

What do you think of it?

Do you feel supported to implement it?

M2) Do you identify gifted and talented children and put them on a register?

If yes:

How do you go about doing this?

What are your thoughts about the process of identification?

If no: go onto next question

M3) What is your idea of a gifted and talented child? Explain your image of it as you see it.

Do you have any thoughts about it?

M4) Do you make special provision for gifted and talented (more able / higher ability – use terminology that has been identified as preferred in question 2) children?

If yes – How do you do this?

What kinds of provision do you make?

Could you give an example?

Do you make provision in all subjects?

What organisational structures do you use?

If no – why not?

M5) What do you know about government policy for the gifted and talented?

Have you benefited from any funding for gifted and talented?

If yes – How have you used this money / training / opportunity?

How has government policy helped you in meeting the needs of gifted and talented children in your school?

M6) Have you had external support from the LA?

How well have you felt supported by them?

M7) If you could have a wish list for gifted and talented, what would be your

3 wishes?

Semi-structured interviews

Questions for children

C1) Do you have a gifted and talented group in your class (or whatever the agreed term is that the children might recognise)?

If yes – Are you in a gifted and talented group? Why? If you had to explain to someone why you are part of this group, how would you do it?

If no – go on to question 2 if appropriate

C2) Being in that group, do you get anything special?

What happens differently in those groups?

Can you give me an example?

C3) Are there any other special groups for any subjects?

C4) Do you feel challenged in your work?

Can you give me examples of challenging tasks and tasks where you have not felt challenged?

C5) How do other children feel about you being in this group?

C6) Do your parents know you are in this group? How do they feel about it?

C7) If you were asked if there was anything more the school could do for your special ability, what would you have on your list?

Semi-structured interviews

Questions for parents

- P1) What do you know about gifted and talented groups in this school?
- P2) What do you understand by him / her being a member of this group?
- P3) How do you feel about this?
- P4) Do you think your child is getting anything special? Could you describe what they are getting?
- P5) Do you help him / her with any of the work?
- P6) Do you think your child is especially good at anything? From what age did you notice this?
- P7) Is there anything that the school could be doing that you would like to see?

Appendix 3

Information sheet for participants

An evaluation of the impact of gifted and talented initiatives on an inner-city primary school

Information about the Project

The Excellence in Cities agenda is embedded in the notion of equality for all, emphasising the need to adapt educational opportunities to meet the needs of all students. A strand of this was to provide opportunities for gifted and talented opportunities for inner city children to develop their talents. This was followed by the National Strategy for Gifted and Talented in 2007, although in 2009, it was announced that this initiative was going to be withdrawn.

Information about the researcher

I am studying for a doctorate in education at Brunel University and am undertaking this research project as part of this course.

What does the study involve?

I am interested in finding out more about the impact of these initiatives have had on an ordinary school in an inner-city area.

In order to gain information about this, I am using two ways of collecting data – interviewing and observation. You may be asked to participate in one or both of these methods.

The interview should not take longer than half an hour, and will be recorded, with your permission, to enable me to accurately recall what was said. This will later be transcribed and you will be asked to agree that it is an accurate record.

Your rights as a participant

Both you and your school will remain anonymous in this study, although you may be quoted anonymously in the write-up. You can withdraw before or during participating in the project. All information will remain confidential.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the consent form. Thank you for your time.

If you have any further queries about this research project, please contact Maggie Brady tel: 020 8699 9191 or email maggiebrady@hotmail.co.uk

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

An evaluation of the impact of gifted and talented initiatives on an inner-city primary school

I have read the Information Sheet for Participants

I understand what the study involves for participants

I have sufficient information to be able to consent to participate in this project

I understand I can withdraw at any time

I consent to participating in this study

I understand that my contributions will be used anonymously to maintain confidentiality, but quotes will be used in the final report

I agree to participate in this study

Name.....

Signed

.....Date.....

For further information contact Maggie Brady at maggiebrady@hotmail.co.uk, Professor Valsa Koshy at valsa.koshy@brunel.ac.uk or Dr. Alexis Taylor at alexis.taylor@brunel.ac.uk

Appendix 4

Presentation to Brunel Staff Student Conference 2012

Slide 1

Gifted and Talented Education: My Journey into the Child's Perspective



Maggie Brady
EdD Student

Supervisors: Professor Valsa Koshy
Professor Mike Watts

Slide 2

Context of the research

- 1999 *Excellence in Cities* (Department for Education and Employment) – Gifted and Talented strand
- Between 5-10% of a school's cohort to be identified as "gifted" (in an academic sense) or "talented" (for sports and arts)
- Selective provision for most deprived schools in areas of deprivation
- 2006 – Schools required to identify a percentage of their pupils as gifted and talented and inform the Department for Education
- 2007 – The National Strategy for Gifted and Talented is introduced
- 2011 Funding for National Strategies ends.

Slide 3

My focus

- I set out in 2007 to study the impact of the new National Strategy, but the announcement of its abolition in 2009 led to a refocus on the impact of all the G&T policies
- This required studying a school that had been the recipient of EiC money from the beginning
- The number of initiatives for G&T has led to questions about the way education policy impacts on pupils and the effectiveness of short-lived policies – do they leave lasting impact?

Slide 4

Methodology

- Case study
- This presentation is part of a wider research project, incorporating different stakeholders in the school
- The purpose of the research is to evaluate the impact of the policies on an inner-city school
- The focus of this presentation is to explore the views of one of my stakeholder groups – the pupils
- 8 gifted and talented children were interviewed using a semi-structured interview

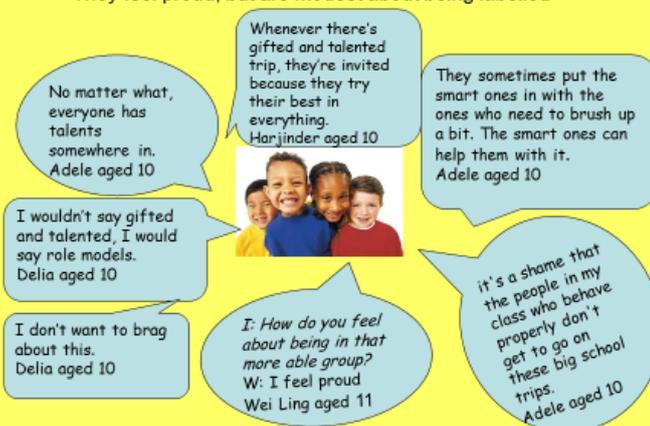
Slide 5

Ethical and practical problems in using children in research

- My decision to use children was a late one
- Punch (2009) - important differences between children and adults as participants – power, competence, vulnerability
- Dockett, Einarsdóttir and Perry (2011) – ethical relationship same for children and adults
- Power relationship – Greig, Taylor and MacKay (2007) - informed assent, not consent. Parents consented as well as the children.
- Competence – Only Year 5 and 6 children used, due to difficulty of questions and reading lengthy transcripts.
- Vulnerability – Harcourt and Conroy (2011) – build up a trusting relationship.

Slide 6

Children's attitudes to being labelled gifted and talented – they believe they have been chosen because of their good behaviour and attitudes. They feel proud, but are modest about being labelled



No matter what, everyone has talents somewhere in. Adele aged 10

Whenever there's gifted and talented trip, they're invited because they try their best in everything. Harjinder aged 10

They sometimes put the smart ones in with the ones who need to brush up a bit. The smart ones can help them with it. Adele aged 10

I wouldn't say gifted and talented, I would say role models. Delia aged 10

I don't want to brag about this. Delia aged 10

*I: How do you feel about being in that more able group?
W: I feel proud
Wei Ling aged 11*

it's a shame that the people in my class who behave properly don't get to go on these big school trips. Adele aged 10

Slide 7

How do they think other children view them? It's a mixed picture – some are ignorant of the existence of Gifted and Talented, some are pleased for them, some are jealous.



Well some people they will say like 'Why is she going to do that? Why don't you pick me for that?', sometimes they want to be picked. So like sometimes they can get jealous of other people.
Delia aged 10

I: How do other children feel about you being in that group?
W: Pleased.
Wei Ling aged 11

The teacher gave them letters...I didn't know why. One of the children asked why did they get letters and why we don't and she said they're one of the well-behaved children. Olu-talented child - aged 10

Not really a lot of them know. I don't think anyone knows.
Adele aged 10

Well they're not jealous or anything. Cos I help them as well in their subjects. I don't mean like give them the answers - I mean like, encourage them, give them tips.
Frederick aged 11

Some might show some inappropriate behaviour or something towards them.
Wei Ling aged 11

Slide 8

What do they think their parents feel about them being in that group?



Well my dad feels really good because he likes sports as well, so he supports me. And my mum is like, she supports me as well... Actually they all support me.
Delia aged 10

From his expressions I know that he feels really happy, and sometimes he gets me a gift, to show like he is really happy because I have tried my best in school- Harjinder aged 10

They feel proud, because when I get chosen all the time they're like "How many times are you going to get chosen to go to trips?"
Olu aged 10

Well they haven't actually said it before but I've said that they would probably like to see more children being able to show that they're gifted and talented.
Adele aged 10

At home they, at home they buy me levels workbooks and when I get home from school, I get a little bit of the work from those books as well.
Frederick aged 11 (son of the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator)

Slide 9

What challenges them in the classroom? A mixture of acceleration and enrichment. In some cases, age appropriate concepts challenge them.



There's Number Wizard and all these sorts of badges
Selina aged 11

Well a challenging one was maths investigations.
Wei Ling aged 11

Most of the time it's the stuff that I really don't understand like - sometimes I don't really understand fractions that well.
Adele aged 10

Like once we did Level 5 and we found it easy so she gave us Level 6 Maths. We did find it a bit hard.
Harjinder aged 10

Learning about the river in China and how we use rivers and like why sometimes... Yeah, how we use rivers and that.
Delia aged 10

Like when you have to write a diary entry or something from their point of view.
Frederick aged 11

A lot of it is easy but sometimes some of the work, like division, challenges me.
Frederick aged 11

Slide 10

Challenges in extra curricular provision – Challenges across many areas, encouraging the children to develop their talents, whatever they are



Yeah, it's quite a challenge. Me, I'm not the best at drawing, I was put there because I was the most enthusiastic, but there's so, so many good drawers there.
Selina aged 11

After he takes us out into the Newgar, that's just outside the playground, then we practise with another person who comes from Bacon's College. Then we do some skills and then we have to practise keeping the ball on our heads. So that's very hard for me.
Olu aged 10

If he thinks you are starting to get better he will invite you to Maths Club on Monday lunch time. It is a choice for us, because some children might want to just stay behind and play their games, but some children want to go to it.
Harjinder aged 10

Aside from sports I am also good at singing, and we have a talent show every year to like... [whatever your talent], you can just go into the talent show and just do it.
Delia aged 10

I found it interesting. It was a good trip because when we dressed up it kind of like brought the picture out of the canvas and brought it to people.
Adele aged 10

Slide 11

Lack of challenge in the classroom – repetition and skills based work. Bad behaviour is an obstacle.



Even though we got the hardest one, I found it quite easy. Because at home I am used to doing harder Maths.
Harjinder aged 10

Multiplication. Like sometimes in the grid method. It's kind of easy for me - I don't feel challenged at all.
Tobi aged 11

When they give you lessons and you are used to it and you already understand, for example.
Wei Ling aged 11

Sometimes the Easter holidays, they give you some really hard literacy and maths work. But it's only if all the silly behaviour can get together and then stop.
Adele aged 10

It was just like you can do whatever you want and you're like, not pushed, like you get to write what you want and nobody says "Oh, that's not good".
Selina aged 11

There was one time we had a test and we all didn't get it right, and then we had it again and then we had it again and again... I thought it was really easy for that one. - Delia aged 10

Slide 12

Conclusions

- Interviewing children has presented many challenges, both in the practical and ethical issues involved, and has helped me hone my research skills as a result.
- In terms of results, the children have benefitted from EiC funding and this has been well used in the school. Much of the enrichment provision has been provided using this money.
- Now there is no funding and no central policy, what will happen? Is gifted and talented provision sufficiently well embedded in the school's ethos to ensure a sustained approach to providing appropriately for its most able pupils?
- Is the story of gifted and talented policies typical of other educational policies? What should good educational policy making look like?

Appendix 5

Gifted and Talented policy

Primary School Policy for Gifted and Talented Pupils

Rationale

We believe in the development of the whole child, and that every individual should have the opportunity to develop and achieve to their full potential. We believe that the able child needs just as much support, guidance and encouragement as the less able child.

Aims and Objectives

Primary School aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which is both challenging and enriching. The particular needs of gifted and talented pupils will be met through intellectual, creative or physical stimulation; and enriched and extended curriculum opportunities - in order to develop a higher level of thinking skills. This will often be achieved through differentiation, but may additionally require separate work to be set in school and for homework.

Definition

A 'gifted' child is one who shows a high level of ability in one or more of the academic subjects. A 'talented' child is one who shows a high level of ability in one of the creative subjects or in sport. (Excellence in Cities definition)

It should be remembered that children might display ability in any one of the following;

- Leadership skills
- Creativity
- Outstanding cognitive ability
- Physical talent
- Artistic talent
- Mechanical ingenuity

(Ogilvie, 1973)

They might have one or several of the following;

- Musical intelligence
- Logical-mathematical intelligence
- Spatial intelligence
- Linguistic intelligence
- Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence
- Interpersonal intelligence
- Intrapersonal intelligence

(Gardner 1983)

Identification

We will identify a gifted and talented cohort of 10% of the school roll. In addition, each subject leader will identify pupils who show ability in that particular subject.

Pupils will be identified using a wide range of methods, which include

- The provision of challenging work
- Analysis of information from previous school
- Teacher observation, assessment and tracking
- Use of standardised tests (NFER/CATS)
- Parental nomination

We will make every effort to ensure that pupils with high potential, but who may not be reaching that potential (i.e. able under-achievers) are identified, and not simply those who are already achieving highly.

Provision

Classroom provision:

Differs Lessons need to provide opportunities for extension and enrichment. More able pupils are allowed to move on more quickly to more challenging activities or to undertake more independent study. Planning reflects the need for extension and enrichment.

We recognise the importance of establishing the extent of each pupil's prior knowledge and understanding, in order to avoid unnecessary repetition of work, which is both boring and very demotivating.

Provision outside the classroom:

Outside provision A wide range of enrichment opportunities are offered, in the form of after school clubs and occasional trips and projects. These include clubs which are particularly appropriate for able pupils. In addition we make children aware of the enrichment opportunities arranged centrally by the Local Authority, and encourage them to attend as many as possible.

Groupings:

Ability groups Flexible groupings within the classroom, and setting are used to enable pupils to work at high levels. We recognise, however, that setting does not remove the need for differentiation.

Mentoring and Pastoral Care

We recognise that gifted and talented/able pupils may have particular needs, and care will be taken to ensure that they receive appropriate pastoral support.

INSET

Appropriate training will be arranged for all staff to ensure that they have the skill and knowledge necessary to provide high quality provision for the most able pupils. They will be encouraged to attend subject specific training arranged by outside providers.

Roles and Responsibilities

We have a named leading teacher, who has the full support of the Headteacher and governing body, and who is responsible for the overseeing of provision for our gifted and talented/able pupils. The leading teacher is given non- contact time each week, in order to effectively carry out the role.

His/her responsibilities include:

- Identifying the school cohort.
- Maintaining up to date records on each pupil on the cohort.
- Ensuring that the progress of each pupil on the cohort is effectively tracked.
- Advising staff on provision for these pupils.
- Identifying staff INSET needs, and arranging appropriate training.
- Disseminating good practice amongst staff.
- Administering the school budget for gifted and talented pupils, and developing appropriate resources.
- Liaising with parents.

It is the responsibility of all subject coordinators to ensure that gifted and talented/able pupils are appropriately provided for in their own subject area and to use the agreed methods for the identification of their most able pupils.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is monitored by the Gifted and Talented Leading Teacher, working with the Senior Management team. Its effectiveness is evaluated regularly, and appropriate revisions made.

Gifted and Talented Provision – an update

We identify approximately 10% of the school roll as Gifted and Talented (this is a figure set by the former DCSF). Staff and the Inclusion Manager together decide who to include on this list. We identify pupils who have a specific gift or talent which needs additional provision to fully develop. All pupils are gifted and talented but only some need this additional provision which means that pupils can come on and off the register.

The following considerations inform identification:

- tracking levels
- high levels of potential in a sport, art, musical or other activity
- staff referral
- staff are given advice on characteristics of Gifted and Talented pupils
- care is taken in the Foundation Stage to avoid misidentifying pupils who merely have different rates of development which will even out over time
- selection for representative sports teams
- advice from visiting specialists
- advice from subject leaders
- potential may be as yet not fully realised
- observation of thinking skills in specific lessons e.g. Philosophy for Children
- Non-verbal testing

When planning lessons, teachers give thought to the needs of able children, planning extensions, building in an element of pupil independent study, developing thinking through questioning and ensuring all needs are catered for.

The following activities have also been provided for identified pupils at C

- Maths Club and upcoming competitive Maths fixtures
- Debate training
- Drama
- Choir
- Sports teams (including netball, football, rugby, cricket, etc)
- Special visits (including Wisley Gardens, Royal Observatory, etc)
- Analysis of Tracking to ensure G and T pupils continue to make progress
- Special transition programme to ensure Secondary Schools are aware of pupil gifts and talents
- Sessions with an author as part of a specific LA programme
- Setting, including allowing a Year 4 pupil to study Maths in Year 5 and 6 groups this year

Appendix 6

School's Teaching and Learning Policy

Teaching and Learning Policy Primary School

We believe that children are lifelong learners who deserve inspirational and enjoyable education. Our core values are at the heart of this policy and shape all teaching and learning opportunities.

Aims:

- To ensure continuity and consistency in teaching and learning throughout the school
- To maintain high expectations and enable children to reach their full potential
- To ensure teaching and learning ignites enthusiasm, motivates independence and promotes enjoyment of school life
- To encourage pupils to develop confidence, investigation skills and persistence in order to make informed decisions

Learning Environment

We provide a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment that promotes a sense of well-being and purpose.

The creative curriculum enables teachers to transform their classrooms each term and showcase the range of learning outcomes. Grange children develop a feeling of ownership and pride as their work can be seen all over the school. Diversity, identity and all abilities are celebrated.

Planning and Preparation

All phases (Foundation, KS1, KS2 lower and KS2 upper) plan together, to ensure consistency and to capitalise on individual expertise and strength. Being a 1.5 form entry school means we have a bi-annual topic cycle which is regularly reviewed. Clear objectives, a wide knowledge of teaching and learning strategies and pedagogy of skills help teachers to create plans that are inclusive and build on the children's understanding and knowledge. Effective and ongoing assessment shapes all planning. Short-term plans demonstrate how teachers have adapted, personalised and evaluated the learning that has occurred. Moderation, pupil progress meetings, phase meetings and termly tracking, all inform this process. Planning is monitored by subject leaders and the senior leadership team.

All lessons are well resourced (human and physical) and carefully considered. Resources support pupils of all abilities and motivate learning.

Staff and Pupil Interaction:

Teachers work with the whole class, small groups and individual pupils. Teaching and Learning Support Assistants work with small groups and individual pupils. Teachers use tracking, ongoing assessment and next steps to group pupils. Ability groups and guided sessions (reading, writing and numeracy) allow teachers to effectively differentiate planning and tailor teaching and learning for specific next steps. Staff conference individual pupils to ensure they understand what they need to do to in order to make progress.

Ability
Differ.

Children are encouraged to actively participate in their learning. A variation of teaching strategies and methods are used, for example: questioning, discussion, partner and small group investigations, 'show me' feedback strategies, talking partners, peer demonstration, marking response time, etc.

In the Foundation Stage, there is an emphasis on investigative learning. Staff are committed to providing opportunities and a learning environment where a balance of co-operative and autonomous learning is encouraged. The learning environment provides pupils with real reasons for learning. We take care to ensure that focussed activities have an appropriately high level of adult support in addition to those activities that are initiated by the pupils themselves. This continues into Key Stage One with the transition curriculum for Y1. In KS1 and lower KS2 teachers adapt their planning to incorporate self-initiated and real-life learning opportunities.

Whilst teaching staff are responsible for all aspects of the children's learning, support staff have a major role to play in supporting and facilitating teaching and learning. Teaching assistants are involved in the planning process and constantly feedback to teachers, strengthening the assessment cycle and knowledge of pupils, assisting the next steps process.

Recording Work:

Work is recorded in a variety of ways. Children are encouraged to demonstrate their learning in their workbooks and our marking policy guides how teachers respond to their learning. Pupils must indicate the Learning Objective, WALT and/or success criteria, so the focus of the lesson is clearly communicated. Classrooms showcase the learning that has taken place in each curriculum unit and topic. Class work may be also practical and demonstrated through performance, speaking and listening opportunities, paired and group work.

Teaching, Learning and Planning

The National Literacy Strategy forms the basis of teaching and learning. All children receive the minimum entitlement of a daily literacy lesson. Teachers plan in a variety of ways.

Teachers work towards independent learning and plan for different working groups e.g. whole class/small group/paired/individual.

Teachers employ a range of generic teaching strategies including:

- o instructing/directing
- o modelling/demonstrating/scribing
- o explaining
- o questioning
- o discussing
- o consolidating
- o evaluating
- o summarising

Teachers use the Literacy Framework for medium term planning. These are used as a basis for short term planning and adapted according to the text type and the needs of the children. The length of a unit may vary.

Clear objectives are set for each session and are shared with pupils.

Teachers differentiate according to the needs of the pupils and use intervention programmes for targeted support.

Literacy contributes to many subjects within the primary curriculum and opportunities will be sought to draw literacy experience out of a wide range of activities as this will allow children to begin to use and apply their skills in real contexts.

ICT is used where it enhances, extends and complements literacy teaching and learning.

Additional adults are used to support the teaching of Literacy. They work under the guidance of the teacher with small groups of children or individuals.

Inclusion

All children receive carefully differentiated, quality literacy teaching, usually on a daily basis. In addition, where identified pupils are considered to require targeted support to enable them to work towards age appropriate objectives, intervention programmes (ELS, ALS, FLS) will be implemented as a second wave support. Teachers and teaching assistants plan programmes together and monitor progress of these pupils.

There will be a third wave of support for pupils who are placed on School Action or School Action Plus, which will be additional and different. More able pupils are planned for in line with our policy for teaching more able pupils.

The needs of children with English as an additional language will be met through planning and support from TAs and the EMA co-ordinator when necessary.

Parental/Community involvement

We value parent involvement in children's development of literacy and promote a home school partnership in the following ways:

- o sharing information – newsletters, curriculum evenings, parents' leaflets, reading diaries
- o celebrations – family assemblies, school performances, displays, book fairs
- o homework – in line with our homework policy and home/school agreement.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessments are made in line with the school assessment policy. Teachers report to parents twice a year at parents' evenings and in the annual written report to parents.

Children are assessed on entering the school and are formally assessed at the end of KS1. Optional tests are used in years 3, 4 and 5 as a form of summative assessment. These are moderated through staff meetings.

Teachers use assessment for learning to ensure planning is based on prior attainment and that pupils know what they need to do to achieve the next steps. Group or individual targets are set accordingly. Short-term assessments will be an informal part of every lesson to check understanding and give the teacher information, which will help to adjust day-to-day lesson plans.

Self-Assessment

Where possible, children should be involved in assessing their own work.

This might include:

Traffic Lights – How did they find the work?

W.I.L.F. (What I'm looking for) – linked to objectives/success criteria

Peer assessment – peers thoughts recorded periodically

Target Setting

Layered targets are used to ensure that whole school issues are undertaken through key stages, year groups, classes and on an individual level. Analysis of assessment data is used to set numerical targets and a whole school literacy curricular target(s). The Curricular targets are shared with children and parents. Class targets are linked to the school curricular target and are reviewed when appropriate.

Class teachers keep individual records. These include a reading record and any other information that enables the teacher to deliver an effective, relevant curriculum which builds on prior attainment and meets the needs of pupils.

Marking is in line with the school marking and feedback policy.

Staff Development

Teachers keep up to date with subject knowledge and use current materials that are available in school, the Standards Website

(www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/literacy) and CLPE website (www.clpe.co.uk).

Training needs are identified as a result of whole school monitoring and evaluation, performance management and through induction programmes. These will be reflected in the School Improvement Plan which includes the Literacy Action Plan. The literacy co-ordinator gives relevant advice and information about available courses, publications and resources. Feedback from courses, development groups and written information is disseminated and where necessary the literacy co-ordinator lead or organise school based training.

Additional adults who are involved with intervention programmes will receive appropriate training that may be school based or part of LEA central training.

Resources and Accommodation

A comprehensive range of resources is available in school. Every class has a selection of reference books, e.g. dictionaries, thesaurus etc and a class fiction library. In addition each class has a variety of reading materials which includes leaflets, posters, magazines, etc.

Guided reading books and teacher resources are kept centrally in the Teachers' Workshop and the resource room on the top floor. Additional books are also kept in classrooms. KS1 books are banded (see Reading chart on shared area).

The main school library contains a range of non-fiction books, dual language books, children's magazines and comics.

Literary events are celebrated where appropriate within the school calendar, and regular book fairs are held. Other events may include special displays, author visits, library visits, visiting drama specialists, puppet shows and theatre groups – many with cross curricula links.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Literacy is monitored by teachers, the Literacy Co-ordinator, the Headteacher and Literacy Governor. Having identified priorities, the Literacy Co-ordinator constructs an action plan that forms part of the School Improvement Plan. This forms the basis for any monitoring activities and will clearly identify when, who and what is to be monitored and how this will take place e.g. classroom observation, planning scrutiny, work sampling etc.

The Disability Discrimination Act (2006)

The Disability Discrimination Act (2006) requires school to promote equality of opportunity for all pupils. In literacy we will meet this duty by:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum
- improving the learning environment to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate and take advantage of the improving the delivery of information to disabled pupils which is literacy curriculum
- provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled

The effectiveness of our policy and practice on the educational opportunities available to and achievements of disabled pupils will be judged through monitoring by the literacy coordinator

Role of the Coordinator

To lead and manage Literacy within the school.

To secure high quality teaching; effective use of resources and the highest standards of learning and achievement for all pupils.

To liaise closely with Key Stage colleagues in order to:

1. To be a role model and demonstrate good practice.
2. Keep the written policy document up to date and keep under review the scheme of work for Literacy in line with the requirements of the National Framework.
3. Encourage and support staff in the implementation of the agreed procedures and closely monitor the progression of activities and consistency of approach across both year groups and Key Stages.

4. Manage the financial allocation to Literacy effectively and purchase and organise all Literacy resources, ensuring they are readily available and well maintained.
5. Monitor standards in Literacy across the school through classroom observation, work scrutiny, teachers' planning, discussion with pupils and data analysis.
6. Contribute to whole-school curriculum improvement by advising the SMT and Governors' Curriculum Committee on areas of strength and weakness and identifying clear targets to improve and sustain pupil achievement.
7. Lead the teaching of Literacy by example and afford colleagues the opportunity to share in good practice. Lead professional development in Literacy in accordance with staff development needs and support and guide staff by encouraging the sharing of ideas.
8. Be aware of national development in Literacy through reading relevant materials and attending courses when appropriate.
9. Further parental involvement and knowledge by facilitating support and advice through curriculum evenings and disseminating relevant information.
10. Submit regular feedback on standards in Literacy to the SMT.
11. Submit an annual written report each Summer Term, which informs the Governing Body of progress in this area towards targets in the School Improvement Plan, also of issues raised as a result of co-ordinator monitoring visits.
12. Work to achieve equality of opportunity through the school.

Role of the Headteacher

- Lead, manage and monitor the implementation of Literacy including monitoring teaching plans and the quality of teaching in the classroom
- With the literacy governor, keep the governing body informed about the progress of literacy.
- Ensure that literacy remains a high profile in the school's development work
- Deploy support staff to maximise support for the framework

Review

This policy will be reviewed according to the School Strategic Plan.

Reviewed March 2008

Appendix 7

Maths Policy

Key points for Mathematics teaching at [] Primary School

We follow the revised national framework for teaching Numeracy and this should be referred to for detail about the methods and rationale behind these used in Maths at [] Primary School.

<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/primaryframework/mathematicsframework>

The Maths Coordinator, together with other senior leaders and members of SMT regularly monitors teaching of maths, planning and undertakes book scrutinies to ensure coverage is varied and teaching of a good standard. Support is provided under the whole-school programme of CPD to enable teachers to improve their teaching where necessary.

We use the Numeracy framework's guidance on teaching written methods as our written methods policy. <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/47364>

We actively encourage mental methods as a first resort; we make use of an empty number line as soon as children are ready for this.

We use the 'tracking up/down' system of matching objectives from the framework to the children in a teaching group. Maths is currently set by ability in KS2

Assessment is ongoing – for details and methodology see the Assessment Policy.

Appendix 8

School Improvement Plan (2012-13)

(Relevant part relating to Gifted and Talented and Higher Ability Provision)

Primary School
School Improvement and Raising Achievement Plan
2012 - 2013
Love Hope Co-operation Respect

Teaching and Learning

6

<p>- Improving provision for G&T and HA.</p>	<p>Using and Applying. Review planning, resources and share ideas for U&A across the school. Make links with topics. Consider Maths Whizz. Plan for "Problem Solving Friday" Develop use of higher order thinking Q&A for all ch/n. Design further support for HA ch/n. Extend Maths Club.</p>			<p>Mathletics has specific planning and is individualised. Maths Week is focused on U&A. Regular problem solving focus in every class. Planning and monitoring evidences higher order thinking. Range of provision for G&T.</p>	
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Appendix 9

Ethics Approval

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

**APPLICATION FORM
FOR
RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL**

SECTION A: GENERAL

1. Title of the Study:	A study of the impact of gifted and talented initiatives on an inner-city primary school		
Project Start Date:	September 2011	Project End Date:	September 2013

2. Full name of applicant: Margaret Ruth Brady					
Position Held:		Doctorate in Education student			
School:	Sport and Education	Course Title (if student):		EdD	
Email:	maggiebrady@hotmail.co.uk	Telephone:	020 8699 9191 07904 910452	Fax:	n/a

Please provide details of any and all other researcher(s) who will work on the research project:

Name(s):	n/a				
Position Held:					
Location:					
Contact details (e-mail/telephone/fax):					
Name(s):					
Position Held:					
Location:					
Contact details (e-mail/telephone/fax):					
Name(s):					
Position Held:					
Location:					
Contact details (e-mail/telephone/fax):					

3. Is this a student proposal?	Yes			
If yes, please complete the remainder of this section.				
Supervisor Name:	Professor Valsa Koshy Dr Alexis Taylor	Position held:	First supervisor Second supervisor	
Location:	Brunel University			

Contact details (email/telephone/fax):	valsa.koshy@brunel.ac.uk alexis.taylor@brunel.co.uk
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4. Declaration to be signed by the Applicant or the supervisor in the case of a student:
- I confirm that the research will be undertaken in accordance with the Brunel University Ethical Framework, Good Research Practice Policy, and Code of Research Ethics.
 - I will undertake to report formally to the relevant University Research Ethics Committee for continuing review approval.
 - I shall ensure that any changes in approved research protocols are reported promptly for approval by the relevant University Ethics committee.
 - I shall ensure that the research study complies with the law and Brunel University policies on the use of human material (if applicable) and health and safety.
 - I am satisfied that the research study is compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998, and that necessary arrangements have been, or will be, made with regard to the storage and processing of participants' personal information and generally, to ensure confidentiality of such data supplied and generated in the course of the research.
- (Note: Where relevant, further advice is available from the Information Access Officer, e-mail data-protection@brunel.ac.uk).*
- I will ensure that all adverse or unforeseen problems arising from the research project are reported in a timely fashion to the Chair of the relevant University Research Ethics Committee.
 - I will undertake to provide notification when the study is complete and if it fails to start or is abandoned.
 - I have met and advised the student on the ethical aspects of the study design and am satisfied that it complies with the current professional (*where relevant*), School and University guidelines.

Signature of Applicant:

Date:.....

Signature of Supervisor:.....

Date:.....

SECTION B: FUNDING

5. If the research is externally funded, what is the source of the funding?

n/a

5.1. Are there any conditions attached to the funding?

YES

NO

If yes, please specify.

SECTION C: THE RESEARCH

6. In **lay terms**, please provide an outline of the proposed research, including:

- background
- objectives
- research methodology
- contribution of research
- justification of benefit

(max 1000 words).

Background

Concerns were raised at the end of the last century about the lack of opportunities in the education system in England for children in inner cities to develop their academic potential (DfEE, 1997; Young and Tyre, 1992). This culminated in a major initiative by the Government called Excellence in Cities (DfEE, 1999), aimed at raising achievement in this group of students. This document had a specific strand focused at children who were gifted and talented, a group whose needs are often neglected in education (House of Commons, 1999). The term gifted refers to academic excellence, whereas talented refers to potential in performing areas, such as music, art and sport. The initiative focused on different ways of developing the educational needs of such children, including: appointing in schools leading teachers to train class teachers to plan appropriate activities for this group of children; finding ways to accurately identify children who had potential, but were not yet achieving (Freeman, 1998); local authorities providing activities borough-wide for gifted and talented children to engage in; setting up a national academy at Warwick University for research and summer schools. In 2007 the government brought in the National Strategy for Gifted and Talented, which applied to all schools in England. However, this was short-lived and Strategy was abolished in 2009 (Ofsted, 2009). Thus, at present, in spite of an earlier promise by Government policies, the only means of ensuring that the needs of this group are met are through the directive that Ofsted inspections report on each school's provision during inspections. This has led to the research focusing on the following areas

The initiatives for the gifted and talented have moved at a very fast pace. There is

very little literature on the impact of the strategy available, although aspects of the impact of the Excellence in Cities initiative has been researched (e.g Ofsted 2001, 2009, DCSF, 2009). The Ofsted reports evaluated progress made by local authorities and schools in implementing the initiatives, and found that only a minority of schools were meeting the needs of gifted and talented pupils, whereas the majority were not sufficiently effective in improving performance of their pupils in this group. The DCSF report evaluated the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth at Warwick University at the time of its demise, concluding that whilst their summer schools were effective, other aims, such as disseminating good practice nationwide, were less successful. Thus this has been an under-explored area in research studies. In particular, no studies have directly investigated the impact of the national gifted and talented initiatives within an inner-city primary school. This dearth of research has led to the research focusing on the following areas.

Objectives

- 1) What has been the challenges faced by the school in providing for this group of pupils?
- 2) What are the attitudes of the staff in the school towards teaching the gifted and talented, and
- 3) how have teachers developed their classroom practice?

Methodology

The research will be influenced by a constructivist viewpoint (Mertens, 2005), where the realities of the participants will be recognised as being unique and different. The methodology will be case study (Bassey, 1999), where the case is the chosen school. Because of the nature of the research questions, which focus on the views of participants, qualitative methods will be used for data collection and analysis.

RQ1 : Interviews will be undertaken with staff members in various posts, plus governors, parents and some gifted and talented pupils. Pupils and their parents will be interviewed to gain an understanding of how they view the provision, and to discover if the effect is as intended by the teachers.

RQ2 : Interviews will be held with the gifted and talented co-ordinator, headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, class teachers and support staff.

RQ3: Where teachers have been interviewed, if they consent, this will be followed up by observations in class, to see how their view of teaching this group impacts on their classroom.

The interviews will be semi-structured, as there will need to be scope for participants to be able to express their views, whilst needing to keep a clear focus on the objectives listed. All will be interviewed individually, with the possible exception of the children, if they are unwilling to be interviewed alone. Interviews will be recorded, with permission, and transcribed.

The data will be analysed by coding it into emerging themes from the data, (Robson, 2002; Flick, 2002). The research is exploratory, and it is not envisaged that clear

themes will be apparent as a result of the literature review. These themes will be described in the results section of the thesis, and quotes will be used from the transcripts, to provide both evidence and further clarity to the arguments.

Contribution of Research

This research provides an opportunity at the end of all the national initiatives to take an overview of the impact and to investigate what practitioners think, and more importantly what practitioners do, in a school where this has been a focus for over a decade. It will contribute to a discussion about where this area of teaching needs to go now, where little outside support will be available, and schools will be left to deal with the issue as they see fit. Using Bassey's (1999) notion of "fuzzy generalisations", it will be hoped that others will be able to draw some wider conclusions from the data, which of course pertain to the school in question, which will be a limitation of the study.

Justification of Benefit

The research will identify strengths and weaknesses in the previous initiatives, and make suggestions for useful ways forward in a new political climate. These will be shared initially with the school, and if she is still in post, the gifted and talented advisor in the local authority. Otherwise dissemination of the findings will be made through publication (such as Gifted Education International, Journal of Education Policy) and presentations at research conferences (e.g. British Educational Research Association (BERA) conference) as well as professional events in schools and the local authority.

References

Bassey, M. (1999) *Case Study Research in Educational Settings* Open University Press: Buckingham

DfEE (1997) *Excellence in Schools* White Paper (Cm 3681) London: HMSO

DFEE (1999) *Excellence in Cities* London: The Stationary Office

DCSF (2009) *National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth Evaluation* Nottingham: DFES Publications

DCSF (2008) *The National Strategies: Gifted and Talented Education Guidance on preventing underachievement: a focus on exceptionally able pupils*

Flick U ((2002) *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* London:Sage

Freeman J. (1998) *Educating the Very Able* London HMSO

House of Commons (1999) *Third Report from the Education and Employment*

Committee 1998-99 <i>Highly Able Children</i> London: HMSO
Mertens, D. (2005) <i>Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology</i> London: Sage
Ofsted (2001) <i>Providing for gifted and talented pupils: An evaluation of Excellence in Cities and other grant-funded programmes</i> . London: Office for Standards in Education
Ofsted (2009) <i>Gifted and talented Pupils in Schools</i> Manchester: Office for Standards in Education
Robson C. (2002) <i>Real World Research</i> Oxford: Blackwell
Young P. and Tyre C. (1992) <i>Gifted or Able? Realising Children's Potential</i> Buckingham: Open University Press
Attach any questionnaires, psychological tests, etc.
7. Who originated the study?
Maggie Brady, post-graduate student EdD at Brunel University
8. Location of study
8.1 Where will the study take place?
In one selected primary school in the London Borough of Southwark. For reasons of confidentiality it is known a School X
8.2 If the study is to be carried out overseas, what steps have been taken to secure research and ethical permission in the country of study? (Please attach evidence of approval if available.)

9. Multi-centre and off-campus studies					
If this is a multi-centre or off-campus study, please answer the appropriate questions below; otherwise, go to Question 10.					
9.1 Does this project involve a consortium (other research partner organisations)?					
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>YES</td> <td></td> <td>NO</td> <td>no</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	YES		NO	no	
YES		NO	no		
If yes, please complete the details below in Question 9.2.					
9.2 Who has overall responsibility for the study?					
n/a					
Please provide details of the contractual agreement between Brunel University and the other organisation(s).					
9.3 Is this an off-campus study?					
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>YES</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>NO</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	YES	Yes	NO		
YES	Yes	NO			
If yes, please provide signed, written permission from an appropriate level of management within the relevant organisation(s).					
10. Has approval been sought from other Ethics Committees and LRECs?					
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>YES</td> <td></td> <td>NO</td> <td>No</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	YES		NO	No	
YES		NO	No		
Please enclose copies of approval letters, where applicable.					

11. If appropriate, has the protocol been reviewed by a statistician? n/a				
YES			NO	
No				
If yes, give the name of the statistician:				
Position held:	n/a			
11.1 Define (<i>where necessary</i>) the statistical power of the study.				
n/a				
12. Who will have overall control of the data generated?				
Maggie Brady, student researcher				
13. How do you propose to disseminate the results of your research?				
Participants will be given the transcripts to read for accuracy and comment. When the thesis for EdD is completed, a copy will be kept in Brunel Library. There will also be publication of articles in journals and professional magazines, conference presentations such as the Education staff-student conference at Brunel University's Department of Education, resulting from findings as the research progresses. The thesis will be shared with the school which is the subject of the case study, and also the local advisor in gifted and talented in Southwark, if she is still in post.				

14. PROCEDURES			
Please state whether the project includes procedures which: (<i>please tick the appropriate box</i>)			
	YES		NO
a. are physically invasive;			No
b. involve the use of human tissue or taking of bodily samples;			No
c. involve the use of biological, radiological, chemical or hazardous substances;			No
d. are psychologically/socially intrusive.			No

If you have answered YES to any of the questions in 14 above, please complete questions 15; otherwise proceed to question 16. You must also consult the Head of Risk and Radiation to ensure compliance with Health and Safety regulations. ***If you are using human tissue in your project, you must complete section H.***

15. Specific procedures involved:
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<p><i>Include details, as applicable, of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the dosage and route of administration of the drug(s) used in and under research, other substances and/or appliances to be administered/used, and the method of administration or use, -measurements and samples to be taken; -tests to be performed; -the use of visual aids or the administration of psychological tests. 				
n/a				
15.1 Might the procedure(s) cause pain, distress, disruption or intrusion to a participant?				
YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please explain.				
15.2. Are there any particular requirements or abstentions which will be imposed upon the participant (e.g., multiple visits, abstention from alcohol, tobacco, etc.)?				
YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please explain.				

16. Products and devices				
16.1 Does the research involve the testing of a product or device?				
YES		NO	No	
If yes, please describe it.				
16.2 If this research involves a drug, is it being used in accordance with its licensed uses?				
YES		NO	n/a	
If no, please explain why:				

For the purposes of this section, "participants" include human subjects, their data, their organs and/or tissues. For participants to be recruited to the research, please state:

17. the number of participants: 25-27

18. if data are to be collected on different sites, please state the number of participants at each site:

Site 1:		Number of participants:	
Site 2:		Number of participants:	

(insert additional sites if necessary)

19. How have you arrived at this number? Please state proposed inclusion/exclusion criteria.

As this is a case study, the criteria for inclusion of the participants is that they have participated in the provision of gifted and talented pupils within the school, either by policy making or by teaching or supporting teaching. Included are: Senior leadership team members (3), gifted and talented co-ordinator (1), class teachers representing different levels of the school (7-8), teaching assistants (3), learning mentor (1), link governor (1), parents of gifted and talented pupils (3) and pupils (6-8).
Excluded : anyone who does not belong to the school community, as they are not part of the case, or does not have a teaching or pastoral role in school e.g. the premises officer, school administrator.

20. Age group or range (*e.g., under 60s*):
School related staff – 22-65
Parents – 20-40
Pupils 9-11

21. Sex:	Male		Not known at this stage	Female		
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22. Do participants belong to any of the following vulnerable groups?				
Children:	YES	Yes	NO	
Participants unable to give informed consent in their own right (<i>e.g., people with learning difficulty</i>):				
	YES		NO	No
Other vulnerable groups (<i>e.g., mental illness, dementia, students, refugees, unemployed, prisoners</i>):				
	YES		NO	No

The above list is indicative, not definitive. Care will need to be taken to formulate inclusion/exclusion criteria that clearly justify why certain individuals are to be excluded, to avoid giving the impression of unnecessary discrimination. On the other hand, the need to conduct research in "special" or "vulnerable" groups should be justified and it needs generally to be shown that the data required could not be obtained from any other class of participant.

If the answer to any of the above is yes, please complete Questions 22 to 27; otherwise proceed to Question 28.

23. Please explain why it is necessary to conduct the research in such vulnerable participants and whether required data could be obtained by any other means.

Pupil voice (Lloyd Smith and Tarr, 2002) will add a valuable dimension to the study – to determine the impact of provision from the point of view of the “customer”. There is no other way of getting this data – in my experience, as a teacher, children do not always think what adults say they do, and the only way to be really sure is to ask them.

Lloyd Smith M. and Tarr J. (2002) *Researching children’s perspectives: a sociological dimension* in Lewis A. and Lindsay G. (2002) *Researching children’s perspectives* Buckingham: Open University Press

24. Please state what special or additional arrangements have been made to deal with issues of consent and the procedures to safeguard the interests of such participants.

All participants will be asked to consent in writing (Koshy, 2005) to taking part in the research and will be given the opportunity to withdraw – this will be emphasised for child participants, especially, who may be more likely to feel coerced (Cohen and Manion, 1998), as they are often required to participate in activities in school, without the option of withdrawing. The concept of confidentiality will be explained. The consent form and information will be explained to the children, rather than leaving them to read through it. Children will be asked questions to check their understanding. All young people will be given the choice whether to participate. All young people will have a full written and oral explanation of the purpose of the research. Confidentiality will be maintained for all participants (Denscombe, 2003).

Cohen L. and Manion L. (1998) *Research methods in education* London: Routledge
Denscombe M. (2003) *The Good Research Guide* Berkshire: Open University Press
Koshy V. (2005) *Action Research for Improving Practice* London: Sage

25. Please describe the procedures used to ensure children (i.e., persons under 18 years) are able to provide consent/assent to participation.			
See 24			
26. If appropriate, please state whether and how parental consent, or the consent of the legal guardian and/or order/declaration of the court, will be sought in relation to the participation of children in the research.			
Letters of consent will be sent home for selected children, for parents to sign, along with information about the study.			
27. If the participant is unable to consent in their own right, will you seek the prior approval of an informed independent adult and any other person or body to the inclusion of the participant in the research?			
	YES	Yes	NO
State precisely what arrangements will be put in place.			
The headteacher will be asked to select suitable children. They will be seen by the researcher to have the study explained and conditions. If they are interested, they will take home their consent letter along with one for their parents to sign, to return to school signed (or otherwise) subsequently.			

Recruitment and Selection			
<i>The Research Ethics Committee will need to be satisfied with the effectiveness and propriety of recruitment and selection procedures given the participant involved, e.g., that the participant will not feel in any way obliged to take part, that advertisements do not appear to offer inducements. The Committee will be particularly interested in cases where a participant's relationship with the investigator could raise issues about the voluntary status or motive of the participant's involvement in the research (e.g., students).</i>			
28. How will the participants in the study be selected, approached and recruited (please indicate the inclusion and exclusion criteria)?			
Participants will be selected on the basis of purposive sampling and voluntary sampling (Morgan, 1998); that is certain groups will be selected and then asked if they are willing to take part in the study. For the staff, I will attend a staff meeting to present the research and explain what their involvement would mean. I would then ask for people to volunteer. In addition I will be approaching Senior Management Team and the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator specifically to ask them to participate as they are key – however, it will be explained that even though they are key, they should exercise their right not to participate, if they would prefer not to. Suitable possible participants from the parent and pupil will be identified by the headteacher, and a personal approach will be made, as outlined in 27. As qualitative methods are to be used, further specific sampling techniques are not required.			

Morgan D. (1998) <i>Planning Focus Groups</i> London: Sage					
<i>If you are proposing to advertise, please attach a copy of the advert to be used.</i>					
29. Where are you recruiting the participants?					
In the school that is the subject of the case study					
30. Relationship of participant to investigator:			Participants are unknown to the researcher, except the headteacher, who may well become a participant, but has given consent for her school to be used for this study.		
31. Will the participants take part on a fully voluntary basis?					
	YES	Yes	NO		
32. Will Brunel University students be involved as participants in the research project?					
	YES		NO	No	
If yes, please provide full details.					
33. Will payments or other inducements be made to participants?					
	YES		NO	No	
If yes, give amounts, type and purpose.					
Information to Participants and Consent					
34. Will participants be informed of the purpose of the research?					
	YES	Yes	NO		
If no, please explain why.					
35. Will the participants be given a written information sheet?					
	YES	Yes	NO		
If yes, attach a copy. Attached					
If no, please explain why.					
36. Will written consent be obtained?					
	YES	Yes	NO		
If yes, attach a copy of consent form. Attached					
If no, please explain why.					

<p>37. Where potential participants will/may suffer from any difficulties of communication, state the methods to be employed both to present information to the participants and achieve consent. If written, please attach a copy.</p>					
<p>Children will be given the same information as adult participants, but the study will be explained to them individually in an appropriate manner, as will the consent forms. Any of their questions will be answered, and they will not be asked to take part in the study, if it is clear they neither understand the purpose of the study, or the notion of consent.</p>					
<p>38. Please state how you will bring to the attention of the participants their right to withdraw from the study without penalty.</p>					
<p>It will be on the consent form, and also on the information sheet. Participants will be reminded of their right to withdraw at the commencement of the interviews and lesson observations.</p>					
<p>Where relevant:</p>					
<p>38.1 Will information be given to the participants' GP (if deemed necessary)?</p>					
	YES		NO	n/a	
<p>38.2 Have the participants consented to having their GP informed?</p>					
	YES		NO	n/a	
<p>39. Please state what measures will be taken to protect the confidentiality of the participant's data (i.e., arising out of the research and contained in personal data).</p>					
<p>When writing the thesis, anonymity will be given to the school and all participants (Cohen and Manion, 1998 op.cit). Where quotes are used, they will be referred to by their role in school. This may mean that some staff (headteacher, gifted and talented co-ordinator) could be identified by members of the school reading the thesis, if they chose to. Permission will therefore need to be sought to use the data in this way, and if they are reluctant to have views made public, these quotes would not be able to be used.</p>					
<p>40. How long will the data be retained following completion of the study?</p>					
<p>There may be a need to refer to the data for discussions relating to the research, and therefore the data will be retained confidentially for 5 years following collection. Following this transcripts will be destroyed.</p>					
<p>41. How will participants be informed of the results of the study if they so wish?</p>					
<p>I will arrange to visit the school for a staff meeting, to inform them of the results of the study, when it is written up. Anyone requesting to read the thesis will be given a copy, and a copy will be given to the school, firstly for them to consider the recommendations to assist their school in the area of gifted and talented education, and also as a keepsake to thank them for their co-operation in the project.</p>					

SECTION E: RISKS AND HAZARDS

42. Risk to research participants

42.1 Do you think there are any ethical problems or special considerations with the proposed study?

	YES	NO		No
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If yes, please give details:

42.2 Are there any potential hazards or risks to participants?

	YES	NO		No
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If yes, please specify them and state what precautions have been taken to minimise and deal with them:

43. Risk to researchers

43.1 Are there any potential hazards or risks for the researchers and others associated with participation in the research (as distinct from the research participants)?

	YES	NO		No
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If yes, specify them and state what precautions have been taken to minimise and deal with them.

44. Has a Health & Safety risk assessment been carried out?

YES		NO		N o
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SECTION F: COMPENSATION FOR DEATH OR PERSONAL INJURY

45. Is Brunel University providing indemnity for compensation in the event of

personal injury or death arising out of participation in the research?					
	YES	Yes		NO	
46. If the insurance cover is not being provided by Brunel University, please provide written confirmation that you have insurance cover for negligent and non-negligent harm. n/a					
47. Has a manufacturer provided commercial equipment and/or mechanical devices?					
	YES			NO	No
If yes, please state what arrangements have been made to compensate or provide indemnity in the event of personal injury or death arising from the use of the equipment or mechanical devices.					

SECTION G: CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

48. Are there any potential conflicts of interest arising from the project, deriving from relationships with collaborators/sponsors/participants/interest groups?					
	YES			NO	No
Please disclose all relevant personal and commercial interests.					
49. Does the project require access to intellectual property rights (IPR) belonging to third parties?					
	YES			NO	No
49.1 If yes, has use of such IPR been cleared with the relevant owners? n/a					
	YES			NO	
50 Are arrangements in place to ensure the proper attribution and acknowledgement of inventive contributions to the project by all participants/collaborators? n/a					
	YES			NO	
If yes, please provide evidence of this.					

SECTION H: USE OF HUMAN TISSUE

51. What types of human tissue or other biological material will be used? None					
52. Will the material be obtained from participants in this study? n/a					
	YES			NO	
If yes, please go to question 59.					

53. Will you know the identity of the donor? n/a				
	YES		NO	
If yes, please explain.				
54. Has consent been obtained previously to use the samples for research? n/a				
Yes, for all samples		Only for some samples		No consent has been given
55. Do you plan to seek further consent to use the samples in this project?				
	YES		NO	
If no, please explain.				
56. Will any of the samples be imported from outside the UK? n/a				
	YES		NO	
If yes, please justify the use of imported samples.				
56.1 Please indicate if there is evidence that consent was obtained from the donors.				
56.2 If you are obtaining the samples from a tissue bank within the UK, please provide evidence of consent from the donor(s) and the HTA licence number for the tissue bank.				
57. What types of tests or analysis will be carried out on the samples? n/a				
58. Will the research involve the analysis or use of human DNA in the samples? n/a				
	YES		NO	
<i>Please go to question 68.</i>				
<i>The following questions apply to human tissue or other biological material which is to be obtained from participants in this project.</i>				
59. Please state the nature, amount and frequency of the samples to be taken. n/a				

60. Who will collect the samples? n/a					
61. From whom will the samples be removed? n/a					
	Living donors		Deceased donors		
62. Will you obtain consent from living donors for the use of the samples in this project? n/a					
	YES		NO		
If no, please explain.					
63. Will you obtain consent from living donors for the use of the samples in future projects? n/a					
	YES		NO		
If no, please explain.					
64. Please state the arrangements for obtaining consent to remove and use samples from the deceased for this project. n/a					
65. Will you or others on the research team be able to identify the donors after the samples have been obtained? n/a					
	YES		NO		
If yes, please justify.					
66. What types of tests or analysis will be carried out on the samples? n/a					
67. Will the research involve the analysis or use of human DNA? n/a					
	YES		NO		
68. Please give details of where the samples will be stored, who will have access, and the custodial arrangements. n/a					

69. What will happen to the samples at the end of the research? n/a				
Disposal in accordance with HTA Code of Practice/University Standard Operating Procedures				
Storage by research team pending ethical approval for use in another project				
Storage by research team of acellular material				
Other				
Not yet known				
Please provide further details for the proposed arrangements.				
70. Have you received training on obtaining consent for the use of human tissue? n/a				
	YES		NO	
If no, when do you expect to attend the training session?				
71. What experience do you have in handling human tissue? n/a				
72. Please provide evidence from the Biological and Genetic Modification Safety Committee that they are satisfied with the safety protocols for this project. n/a				

Head of School of Sport & Education
Professor Susan Capel

Brunel
UNIVERSITY
WEST LONDON

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Telephone +44 (0)1895 266494
Fax +44 (0)1895 269769
Web www.brunel.ac.uk

25th July 2011

Dear Maggie

RE22-10 A study of the impact of gifted and talented initiatives on inner-city primary school

I am writing to confirm the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Sport and Education received your application connected to the above mentioned research study. Your application has been independently reviewed to ensure it complies with the University/School Research Ethics requirements and guidelines.

The Chair, acting under delegated authority, is satisfied with the decision reached by the independent reviewers and is pleased to confirm there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study.

Any changes to the protocol contained within your application and any unforeseen ethical issues which arise during the conduct of your study must be notified to the Research Ethics Committee for review.

On behalf of the Research Ethics Committee for the School of Sport and Education, I wish you every success with your study.

Yours sincerely



Dr Gary Armstrong
Chair of Research Ethics Committee
School Of Sport and Education

Appendix 10

Ethical Grid – Stutchbury and Fox (2009)

Rationale External/Ecological	No.	Questions to consider	Issues
Cultural sensitivity	1	Are the values, norms and roles in the environment in which I am working likely to be challenged by this research?	Issues about the power of the researcher, different social class and ethnic group to participants, plus the lack of power of the child participants
Awareness of all parts of the institution	2	What is the relationship between the group/individual I am working with and the institution as a whole? How does it affect the participant(s)?	I was known to some of the participants professionally (although not well), but mostly did not know the participants.
Responsive communication – awareness of the wishes of others	3	How might my work be viewed/interpreted by others in the institution? How will the language I use be interpreted?	Checked understanding of their interpretation of the term 'gifted and talented', Needed to simplify language for children and participants for whom English was not their first language.
Responsibilities to sponsors	4	What are my responsibilities to the people paying for or supporting this research (local authority, my school, external bodies)?	N/A
Codes of practice	5	Have I worked within the British Educational Research Association guidelines? Are there other relevant codes which might also be applicable? Am I aware of my rights and responsibilities through to publication?	Worked to the guidelines of Brunel University Research Ethics Committee. Methodology chapter lays out my awareness of my rights and responsibilities.
Efficiency/ use of resources	6	Have I made efficient use of the resources available to me – including people's time?	Ensured that all interviews are conducted according to the school's timetable. Interviewed members of staff in 'batches' to avoid too many trips to fieldwork site.
Quality of evidence on which conclusions are based	7	Have I got enough evidence to back-up my conclusions and recommendations?	Evidence thoroughly documented in the Results chapter.
The law	8	What legal requirements relating to working with children do I need to comply with? Am I aware of my data protection responsibilities? Can I align the research with the Every Child Matters agenda? Am I aware of the need	Ensured written permission was given for all interviews (and from parents for child participants). As a teacher, I am familiar with legal requirements of working with

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		for disclosure of criminal activity? Do I need written permissions?	children and am DBS checked. Research is integral to Every Child Matters agenda – and was mentioned by many participants.
Risk	9	Are there any risks to anyone as a result of this research?	Children are vulnerable, so care was taken not to raise issues that might be difficult for them, without compromising the research. One participant in particular seemed to have social and communication difficulties, and I took care in the interview to work at his pace and within his comfort zone.

Consequential/Utilitarian			
Benefits for individuals	10	What are the benefits of me doing this research to the participants? Would an alternative methodology bring greater individual benefits?	Child participants enjoyed evaluating provision for their needs and were able to think about their needs. Adult participants will have the benefit of the results to know what more their school could do for gifted and talented pupils. I think exploring views with them individually brought the maximum individual benefits.
Benefits for particular groups/organisation	11	What are the benefits of me doing my research to the school/department? Could these be increased in any way? How will I ensure that they know about my findings? Is my work relevant to the school development plan? Can I justify my choice of methods to my sponsors?	The school will be able to use my research to improve practice, if they choose to do so. I have kept in touch with the school and will offer to attend a staff meeting to feedback my results. I will also give them a copy of my thesis. The school will then have all the information they need to include priorities on the school development plan if they wish to.
Most benefits for society	12	Is this a worthwhile area to research? Am I contributing to the 'greater good'? Is it high quality and open to scrutiny?	This is a very worthwhile area for research. National policy has disappeared, and yet Ofsted and reports such as the Smithers and Robinson (2012) Sutton Trust Report have commented that more able pupils are not being stretched. Teachers need more direction still.
Avoidance of harm	13	Are there any sensitive issues likely to be discussed or aspects of the study likely to cause discomfort or stress?	Some of the teaching did not come out well in terms of provision for the more able, and this might be difficult for those teachers to hear (they may well

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			be able to identify themselves from the quotes). The school will see where their gaps in provision are, which may be difficult.
Benefits for the researcher	14	Am I going to be able to get enough data to write a good thesis? Am I aware of my publication rights? What might I learn from this project? Will it help in my long-term life - goals?	The data has been very rich - and there is ample to draw good conclusions from.

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Deontological		
Avoidance of wrong – honesty and candour	15	Have I been open and honest in advance with everyone who might be affected by this research? Are they aware that they can withdraw, in full or in part, if they wish?
Fairness	16	Have I treated all participants fairly? Am I using incentives fairly? Will I acknowledge everyone involved fairly? Can I treat all participants equally?
Reciprocity	17	Have I explained all the implications and expectations to the participants? Have I negotiated mutually beneficial arrangements? Have I made myself available when those involved might wish me to be? Are the participants clear about roles, including my own, as they relate to expectations?
Tell the truth	18	If there is any need for covert research how will I deal with this? What will I do if I find out something that the participants/school/department do not like? How will I report unpopular findings? How will I deal with misrepresentation of my study by others?
Keep promises	19	Have I clarified access to the raw data and how I will share findings including at publication? How will I ensure confidentiality?
Do the most positive good	20	Is there any other way I could carry out this research that would bring more benefits to those involved?
		The consent form, which was carefully explained to them before interview, has ensured they understand possible consequences of the research.
		I sent cakes to the school after I had completed the research as a thank you – all staff got those, whether they participated or not- but they were not used as incentives, as participants did not know they would be getting them. I tried to treat all participants equally, and using a proforma and semi-structured interview format ensured consistency between interviews.
		All implications and expectations were explained. Roles and rights were constantly referred to. The school made arrangements to suit them.
		There was no covert research. I will discuss unpopular findings with the headteacher and plan how to phrase this when feeding back to the staff to ensure harm is minimised.
		I have set out clearly my methodology and research methods in the Methodology chapter and have anonymised the local authority, the school and the participants to ensure confidentiality.
		I have tried to ensure that the research would bring benefits to

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			<p>the participants and school, as well as to a wider audience. By exploring the views of the participants through in depth interviews, I believe I have allowed them to express their views in depth, incorporating them into a comprehensive analysis. I think my methodology has been the best way to do this.</p>
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Relational/Individual			
Genuine collaboration/ trust established	21	Who are the key people involved? How can I build a constructive relationship with them?	The Headteacher and the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator in the school have been the key people, as well as the Local Authority Adviser. I have maintained a close working relationship with them, and have continued to work on subsequent projects with them.
Avoid imposition/respect autonomy	22	Am I making unreasonable or sensitive demands on any individuals? Do they appreciate that participation is voluntary?	I have been careful not to demand, and ensure that all participants were happy to be interviewed. Where they did not want to respond to requests to observe lessons or respond to their transcripts, I respected their decision, and did not send repeated requests.
Confirmation of findings	23	What steps will I take in my methodology to ensure the validity and reliability of my findings? Can I involve participants in validation? Will I report in an accessible way to those involved?	I offered all participants the opportunity to read their transcripts and respond, and incorporated any comments in my subsequent analysis where relevant. I will attend a staff meeting to report back on my key findings, as I doubt any of the participants will have the time to read the thesis. Unfortunately the child participants have all left the school now so they will not be involved in this process, and nor will their parents.
Respect persons equally	24	How will I demonstrate my respect for all participants? Have I treated pupils in the same way as teachers?	I have tried to treat the child participants in an equal way to adults, in terms of the process, although there was a need to differentiate questions and processes around consent to

Appendix 11

Details of findings from the data relating to themes Findings from interviews about the theme ‘knowledge’

Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
4 out of 9 teachers 1 senior manager	Believe they have insufficient knowledge	Incomplete theories about giftedness. E.g. Celia said: <i>What is gifted and talented and what is just a very able child, so to speak? Because I think sometimes some children may be called gifted or talented because they are... they're the best reader or the best whatever in the class, but then if they were in in another school for example they might not be the best reader. So is it gifted and talented in this school or is it gifted and talented per se sort of thing?</i> (T, I)

Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
3 out of 9 teachers	Initial Teacher training seemed inconsistent in how high a priority gifted and talented education was given	Naheed and Beatrice- some training on gifted education at university. Beatrice did not find it helpful. Jessica – no training.
4 out of 9 teachers	Could not recall any training in school for gifted education.	Gifted and talented education had been mentioned in staff briefings, and staff knew they could go to the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator for help. Inclusion Manager indicated that there had been training for the whole staff on thinking skills including Philosophy for Children (provided by the Local Authority) a few years ago, but there had been many staff changes since.
4 out of 9 teachers 1 of 3 senior managers	Felt they needed more training in school.	Faith said: <i>Perhaps I have not got enough training.</i> (T, I)

Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
9 out of 9 teachers 3 out of 3 senior managers	Did not feel confident in their knowledge of gifted and talented national policy.	Stephen said: <i>So I'm a bit out of touch really. Probably a bit out of touch with anything this current government have set up, to tell the truth.</i> (M, I)
4 of 9 teachers 2 of 3 senior managers 2 of 3 teaching assistants	Unsure of national policy, but could guess what it entailed	Used the context of ‘Every Child Matters’ or ‘Assessing Pupil Progress’ (a system of teacher assessment as part of the National Strategies) to predict government policy on gifted education.
2 of 3 senior managers	Aware of the impact of	Stephen:

	'Excellence in Cities' initiative on the school	<i>Through Excellence in Cities and the funding that [the Local Authority Adviser's] had. I've been on two weekends away without paying a bean for it, you know. (M, I)</i>
1 of 9 teachers 1 of 3 senior managers	Aware of concern nationally about the achievement of higher attainers	Thought gifted and talented national policy would specify the raising of standards for this group. Also attributes this to the latest demands from Ofsted inspections.
1 of 9 teachers 1 of 3 senior managers 1 of 3 teaching assistants	Expressed weariness of number of changes in government policy they have experienced	Tom: <i>I know it always changes when new governments come in, but in terms of, I don't know, I don't really know what they're looking for, to be fair. I just know it always changes. (TA)</i>
1 of 9 teachers 2 of 3 senior managers	Assume there must be a national policy because of the funding they have benefited from. One senior manager credits national policy for ensuring schools provided for gifted and talented pupils.	Stephen: <i>I think the specification of having to have 10% forced our arm if you like. Schools are very wary of it and even now, especially secondary schools, don't want to address the issue. They find it socially divisive, it's from this background where they think all children are the same, a perversion of the comprehensive idea where everyone needs exactly the same and exactly the same curriculum, so harmful. (M, I)</i>
Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
4 of 9 teachers 3 of 3 senior managers 1 of 3 teaching assistants	Said they had read the Gifted and Talented Policy	Only one teaching assistant and one senior manager could remember what the main points are. The protocol for identifying gifted and talented pupils is the key message remembered. 6 teachers and 1 teaching assistant would refer to the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator rather than the school policy, if they were unsure.
1 of 9 teachers 2 of 3 senior managers 1 of 3 teaching assistants	Were able to evaluate the policy	Melanie thought it outlined how to identify gifted and talented children, but its aims were too vague. Charlotte thought it was outdated and did not reflect the current staff group's views, as it mainly refers to academic subjects. Stephen thought it too perfunctory and procedure driven –he wanted it as part of a general Inclusion Policy. Natalie (TA) thought the issue was not if the policy was good enough. She said: It is just adhering to the policy. Just so it is not just a piece of paper and a policy we actually put it into practice. (TA, I)
6 of 9 teachers 1 of 3 teaching assistants	Teachers and teaching assistants attempted to meet the needs of the gifted and talented pupils from their experience and general training.	Beatrice: Sometimes you can differentiate by outcome, but as you become a teacher and you teach and carry out various activities, you soon learnt that if they finish their work and they've got nothing to do, they're going to get bored and then they're going to mess around and you don't really want that, so I kind of figured it out for

		<p>myself ... so I've found it useful to have a kind of a bank of extension activities and problem-solving activities (T, I)</p> <p>Sarah and Beatrice recalled being insufficiently challenged in their own schooling.</p> <p>More recently qualified teachers did not feel sufficiently experienced to know how best to meet the needs of gifted and talented children.</p>
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Findings from interviews for the theme ‘School Provision – Teaching Arrangements

Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
2 out of 9 teachers	Mixed views about the arrangements for setting for numeracy and literacy, where children mixed with those from the other class to form 3 groups for literacy and numeracy.	<p>Jessica: <i>Yes, I know that some people don't agree with ability sets because it highlights the children... the lows know that they are the lows and it makes them probably less confident. And actually I'm sort of one of those people on the bench mark. I do sometimes agree with that but I also think, in terms of a teacher, it's a lot easier to manage the differentiation if they are sat in abilities some of the time. (T, I)</i></p> <p>Peter: <i>I kind of keep swinging backwards and forwards on streaming. ..But the problem was not with our top enders in that school, because they were generally getting to Level 5, Level 6 [grades that are above expected age related levels for 11 year olds] and the results were quite clear, the tracking that they were making very good progress.....Our problem was with the children in the lowest set, where it seemed they were not making any progress at all. (T, I)</i></p>
5 of 9 teachers 1 of 3 teaching assistants	Valued having more able pupils working alongside less able as role models.	Some ambiguity however, as several teachers preferred to teach maths in ability groups but literacy in mixed ability groups.
9 out of 9 teachers	Only two teachers did not group by ability at all	One of these teachers cited her own experiences as a child for her reluctance to ability group. She believes that it tended to pull down the level of the lower ability children when they are placed in ability groups, particularly as the lower groups have worse behaviour too. She sets 3 levels of task, and the pupils pick the task that they think will challenge them. She believes in this way the children's ability levels are not made public and there is no 'stereotyping'.

<p>3 out of 3 parents</p>	<p>Were aware of ability grouping in Year 6 and were supportive of it.</p>	<p>In general they felt ability grouping would enable the teacher to meet their child's needs better.</p> <p>One parent, brought up abroad where ability grouping was commonplace, wished they were ability grouped for all subjects, as less able pupils held back the learning for her child.</p> <p>Another parent commented on the huge range of needs in each class.</p> <p>Another parent wondered whether the teacher had sufficient time to devote to teaching material at her daughter's level.</p>
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Findings from interviews for the theme ‘In-School Provision – Challenge’

Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
5 of 9 teachers 1 of 3 teaching assistants	Teachers tried to challenge all the children in their class.	<p>The means of challenging their pupils varied.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use of ability groups ● Open-ended challenges ● ‘Pushing’ children so they are not allowed to ‘coast’ <p>One teaching assistant felt that the opportunities for challenge were not always available.</p>
3 out of 3 parents	None of the parents thought there was sufficient challenge.	<p>One parent spoke of a discussion where limitations of the school “in taking children further” were pointed out, and that the school was “not really geared up for that”. However, she was concerned that her child was bored at times, with work being repeated from one year to the next. She believed that the school was hampered by limited resources.</p> <p>Some of the children participated in additional activities outside of school, organised by their parents (dance, swimming, music).</p>
8 out of 8 child participants	All child participants felt challenged sometimes but not others.	<p>All children found revision work unchallenging.</p> <p>Learning new concepts in maths was challenging, although these varied from child to child.</p> <p>Story writing and descriptive writing was seen as unchallenging, as was completing sentences to make them grammatical. Being given a level (grade) for their writing was seen as helpful in tracking their progress.</p> <p>Adele found collaborative writing challenging.</p> <p>Frederic found writing tasks more challenging than reading tasks.</p> <p>Selina said: <i>It was just like you can do whatever you want and you're like, not pushed, like you get to write what you want and nobody says "Oh, that's not good". Cos it's like your opinion. And also sometimes challenging. (C, I)</i></p>
8 out of 8 child participants	In subjects other than literacy there was varying challenge.	The children felt well challenged in sport, but in the foundation subjects (such as history, geography, art and music) they felt under-challenged.

		<p>Some of them considered these subjects their special area of talent, but the tasks were often undifferentiated and groupings were mixed ability.</p> <p>In history, writing a diary entry from an historical character's point of view is seen as challenging – learning historical facts is not.</p>
8 out of 8 child participants	<p>Overall the children saw the school as developing their talents in a range of areas, even though they did not feel challenged all of the time. All the children felt that the school helped develop their gift or talent.</p>	

Findings from interviews for ‘School Provision – Differentiation’

Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
6 out of 9 teachers	Describing ways they differentiate	<p>Beatrice: <i>I've found that particularly with maths you have to, because maths is obviously something children get or don't get, so there's usually at least 3 levels of differentiation within the class and usually I would give the high end gifted and talented children open-ended stuff regularly.....</i> (T, I)</p> <p>One teacher spoke of using National Curriculum levels as a guide to tasks they should set in her class.</p> <p>4 other teachers spoke of using the curriculum to differentiate, although some teachers expressed the view that they were not sure how to plan for G&T children.</p> <p>2 teachers spoke of less differentiation by task in literacy activities, expecting the differentiation to be by outcome, or by giving extra resources.</p> <p>Other subjects, such as art, were also differentiated less in general, although where teachers had expertise in these subjects, they tended to differentiate more.</p>
1 out of 3 senior managers	Management view of differentiation	<p>One senior manager thought that the wide range of abilities in the classes meant that the top end did not always get sufficient attention.</p>
2 out of 3 teaching assistants	Describing how they have seen differentiation work	<p>One teaching assistant spoke of a variation in efficiency in differentiating work, with some teachers very adept at knowing what was needed for each child to learn, and others less accurate. One teaching assistant (working in the class where pupils were always taught in mixed ability groups) did not see any differentiation.</p>
8 out of 8 child participants	Children’s experiences of differentiation	<p>Maths was the most clearly differentiated subject for the children. They were aware of other groups in class having different work and that their work was harder. Some also believed that part of being in that group was their ability to work independently, and that the teachers worked with the other groups, because the other children needed more support.</p> <p>They also believed that their role was to help other children who were less able, and for this the teacher sometimes put the children in mixed ability groups.</p> <p>Adele: <i>They just put us into different groups - they sometimes put the smart ones in with the ones who need to brush up a bit. The smart ones can help them with it.</i> (C, I)</p>

Table 5.9 Participants' views on outside provision

Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
3 out of 3 parents	Want to see more extra-curricular provision	<p>Ideas include: A day at a newspaper office More competitive sports opportunities More after-school activities</p>
8 out of 8 child participants	Want to see more extra-curricular provision	<p>Children strongly focused on the G&T extra-curricular activities they have been involved in. Acknowledged sports provision, but emphasised out of school provision with the partnership with a local secondary school.</p> <p>For maths and literacy, children give more weight to provision in lessons than in sport. However saw involvement in Maths Club and the local authority organised tournament as important.</p> <p>The Number Wizard maths programme featured strongly in their responses, as it allowed them to measure their progress against others and confirm their own ability.</p>
2 out of 8 child participants	Believed that trips and opportunities organised by the Local Authority Adviser were a reward for good behaviour.	<p>Adele: <i>I think they're quite nice but sometimes I wish more people could go on them, because there are some children in my class who I think are really good, and it's a shame that the people in my class who behave properly don't get to go on these big school trips. (C, I)</i></p>
2 out of 8 child participants	Recognise that trips do not always relate to their domain of gift or talent.	<p>This exchange with Shaai illustrates this.</p> <p><i>I: So if you are going to a trip to the ballet, is that because you had a gift in dance, or had you been invited along or because you are in the gifted group?</i></p> <p><i>R: It is because we are gifted and talented kids.</i></p> <p><i>I: So you get all the gifted and talented trips going even if you haven't actually shown that you are particularly gifted at ballet for example.</i></p> <p><i>R: Yeah. We just have trips that entertain us.</i></p> <p><i>I: Okay. So why do you think that is?</i></p> <p><i>R: I think it is because, they are probably like trying to award us for being gifted and talented to them, and helping them. So it makes it easier for them. If we are behaving as well it makes it easy for them to focus on other children as well sometimes when they need help (C, I)</i></p> <p>Selina acknowledged that, although she now thought she had become more gifted in art since being selected for the art project, she was not the best in art in school.</p>

Findings from interviews for the theme 'Identification'

Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
2 of 9 teachers	Differing approaches to the gifted and talented register	Beatrice has a proactive approach: <i>The SENCO [Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator] sends an email with information attached suggesting how you would know whether they were gifted and talented and he usually gives you names of children who have been on it in the past and you can compare your children to children who were there. Then you have a look in your class to see which children you think would fit. (T, I)</i> Dawn sees the process as one of being informed, rather than contributing to the process: <i>They either come up as gifted and talented. That is what normally happens and we get told. We get a list at the beginning of the year, who is gifted and talented and in what area. (T, I)</i>
3 of 3 teaching assistants	The main way to include a child on the register is to go through the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator.	Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator is seen as taking on the views of staff regardless of status. One teaching assistant does not believe that there is a register as such, but a list for use by senior management.
9 out of 9 teachers 2 out of 3 senior managers 1 out of 3 teaching assistants	Factors used to identify gifted and talented pupils	All referred to pupils being advanced or standing out in specific areas. Two of nine teachers and two of three Senior Managers used National Curriculum Attainment Targets to aid their decision about what was meant by 'advanced'. Three teachers make provision that allowed identification to be possible, such as asking inferential questions in guided reading sessions, or providing opportunities in sport. Not all teachers were proactive in their search for such pupils. For example, Naheed (class teacher) commented: <i>To be honest, I do not make a conscious effort to find the gifts of children in my class. (T, I)</i>
Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
9 teachers out of 9	Staff have their own ideas about traits associated with giftedness to help them identify gifted pupils.	Several believe giftedness is domain specific. Grasping new concepts is also thought important. e.g. Danielle: <i>I've never really thought thoroughly about it but now you're making me think and I thinking more potential and capacity to keep on going rather than finished product, achieved level of</i>

		<p><i>sophistication or achieved level of skill. I think that is for me what it is. (M, I)</i></p> <p>All teachers look for a child with a special interest. Paula (TA) looked for a child who was articulate, although not necessarily the best behaved.</p> <p>Charlotte (M) looked for leadership skills, who completes work to an advanced level, but also shows creativity.</p> <p>Melanie (T) looked for “thinking outside the box” and the ability to use their own initiative.</p> <p>Peter looked for the ability to go into depth with a task.</p> <p>Celia and Jessica spoke of “natural talent”, but also see others are successful through hard work.</p> <p>4 teachers and a teaching assistant looked for a pupil who mastered specific skills.</p> <p>3 teachers look for creativity.</p>
6 out of 9 teachers	Believed in a number of domains of gift and talent	<p>A clear ethos in the school is that everyone has a gift or talent, and looking at different traits to find this.</p> <p><i>Paula: It is not just the kids that excel at Maths or write great stories or you know. Some of them are great dancers and erm... The ones that I worked with they would often get into trouble but then they would find the time to practise their routines, and they really did a great show. (T, I)</i></p> <p>Paula (Teaching Assistant) identified children with good physical skills from their play during lunchtime.</p> <p>Celia believed that identifying non-academic talents became harder as the children went up the school, compared with the Early Years because of the lack of “creative space” and a more prescriptive curriculum in Key Stage 2.</p>
2 of 9 teachers 1 of 3 senior managers	Questioned whether early identification was possible, due to their views about the fixed nature of gifted traits.	<p><i>Stephen: And it's very difficult in the foundation stage, and if you look at our gifted and talented register, you'll find very few children from the foundation stage, because we're really wary of it, because children from Year 2 to 5/6 develop in such different ways, and it</i></p>

		<p><i>doesn't always reflect how they're going to be when they're older. You get hyperlexic children when they're 5 years old, who are not necessarily top of the class when they're in Year 6. You get children who are very advanced physically at that age, just the nature of child development, so you have to be careful. (M, I)</i></p> <p>Identifying giftedness in the Early Years limited by young children's lack of skills.</p>
1 of 9 teachers	Views about mistakes made in identification.	<p>Stephen believed that it is not so much that children "lose their talent", but that their needs are more able to be met within the classroom, with a corresponding lesser need for other interventions.</p> <p>Two teachers questioned the fixed nature of giftedness, however, which could be one reason for mistakes in identification. Sometimes early promise develops into nothing special.</p> <p>Faith was concerned about the children who were missed.</p> <p>Natalie: <i>I think it is quite difficult to identify them sometimes. (TA, I)</i></p>

Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
3 of 3 parents	Parents were aware there was provision for gifted and talented pupils.	One parent believed the process of identification involved selecting children working at a higher level than expected for their age, and teaching more advanced material, mainly in English and maths.
2 of 3 parents	Parents views of how they noticed their child's talent.	One parent realised that her child was bright at Nursery age, if not before. She described her as being a little "sponge", with what she learnt "sticking". By Reception, she was "whizzing through" her reading books. Her ability was noticed by teachers, which she said "was fantastic for us". She felt teachers had been very positive and supportive about her daughter's ability. Another parent described noticing by the time she was in Year 4 (it should be noted that her daughter had English as an Additional Language), when her daughter starting bringing home badges from the Number Wizard programme, and excelling in sport

Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
3 of 3 parents	Parents spoke of traits that identified their children as gifted or talented.	<p>One parent recognised independence of mind and that her child was frustrated by mistakes, despite reassurance from her parents that mistakes are positive. Her child enjoyed learning across the entire school curriculum, and was adept at spotting cross-curricular links.</p> <p>Another parent described her daughter as being interested in “good things, which make me happy”, being very creative, writing poetry, and reading a lot, using books provided by her parents.</p> <p>Another parent noticed her child’s ability to do hard maths questions with ease, as well as finding out that she was the youngest child in the school to win a gold medal in Number Wizard.</p>
3 of 3 parents	Parents recognised giftedness was more than academic achievement.	<p>Parents cited their children’s achievements across a range of domains. One parent was concerned her “all-rounder” child had not found her niche yet.</p> <p>Adele’s mother was concerned about how diversity within “gifted and talented” could be reconciled:</p> <p><i>The gifted and talented thing is fine but you might have a child that is really, really super talented at sports and a child like Adele that is really good at literacy. How do you bring those areas together? They are areas of interest that are completely different but they are similarly talented it is just completely in totally different areas. (P, I)</i></p>
2 of 3 parents	There were other gifted family members	2 of 3 parents said that their child had gifted siblings, and one parent had been gifted in the domains of sport and maths also, when at school.
3 of 3 parents	All parents supported their children at home with academic work.	<p>Parents said they wanted to work together with their child to find out what they needed to complete tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provided resources (e.g. books) -Helped with homework sometimes -Used the internet to help research -Talked through ideas -Calmed them when they became frustrated with learning <p>Parents did not like helping with maths, as schools taught different methods to the ones they knew.</p>

<p>8 of 8 child participants</p>	<p>Differing views of the traits of gifted and talented pupils</p>	<p>Most child participants quoted known achievements as a reason for being gifted or talented.</p> <p>Adele thought friendship and her ability to be kind to people to be her greatest gift.</p> <p>Shaaï linked giftedness to good behaviour.</p> <p>Selina thought attitude was the most important trait, seeing her drawing improve after being selected for an art project: <i>Yeah, it's quite a challenge. Me, I'm not the best at drawing, I was put there because I was the most enthusiastic, but there's so, so many good drawers there.</i> (C, I)</p>
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Findings from the interview data for participants' attitudes to 'G&T education'

Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
2 out of 9 teachers 1 out of 8 children	Disliked term 'gifted and talented'.	<p>Celia: <i>I mean I have a sort of, not problem, but what does 'gifted and talented' actually mean because I think different people interpret it differently?</i> (T, I)</p> <p>Jessica: <i>But I do find it a strange term and I never have actually really been properly sat down and explained exactly what it means.</i> (T, I)</p> <p>Delia: <i>I wouldn't say gifted and talented, I would say role models.</i> (C, I)</p>
2 of 9 teachers 1 of 3 senior managers	Problems with the interpretation of the term 'gifted and talented', believing it is used for children who are not gifted.	<p>Beatrice: <i>So I guess in this setting they are gifted and talented, because they are head and shoulders above the majority of the class. But I just worry that if they were in another setting then they wouldn't be gifted and talented in that setting.</i> (T, I)</p> <p>Stephen: <i>OK 10% is a completely arbitrary figure - it could be 20%, it could be 5%, but that's actually forced schools into actually naming kids, actually talking to some parents about it, which is still a big issue.</i> (M, I)</p> <p>Charlotte also saw reluctance to identify, when she stated: <i>So it's very easy to just look at their levels in the core subjects, without actually looking at the whole child. I've got a couple of very creative teachers that would challenge that all the way, but I've got a load of others that even think it's an imposition to be asked to add to a Gifted and Talented register.</i> (M, I)</p>

Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
4 out of 9 teachers 1 out of 3 teaching assistants 1 out of 3 parents	Thought children knew who was in the gifted and talented group and had mixed feelings about this.	<p>Children handled the situation well in school, and did not "look down on other children" (Beatrice, T, I).</p> <p>2 of 9 teachers and one parent worried and one teaching assistant worried gifted and talented children may not like to be seen as 'different'. One teacher believed there was a stigma attached to the label.</p>

		<p>3 teachers believed children were proud to be in this group.</p> <p>11 participants stated everyone has a gift or talent.</p> <p>Some teachers had qualms about identifying this group openly e.g. Sarah: <i>So I think it has to be done subtly and not necessarily that the whole class knows so and so is gifted and talented at such and such.</i> (T, I)</p> <p>4 out of 9 teachers felt that gifted and talented pupils may cause problems for others, e.g. Melanie: <i>Well, I think there's maybe some sort of I'm better than you, because I go to this intervention and I'm more intelligent than you because I go to this.</i> (T, I)</p> <p>Danielle also suggested: <i>Maybe it's like a message, keep an eye open for gifted and talented but don't forget that everyone can be, to a certain extent, given the opportunity and having the potential to be gifted and talented.</i> (M, I)</p>
8 out of 8 child participants	How pupils knew they were gifted and talented. There were a range of feelings about identifying themselves.	<p>Evidence they used to identify themselves included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invitations to go on gifted and talented trips Their levels (grades) Their ability group in class Being selected to play for the school teams <p>Children were reluctant to talk about it e.g. Delia didn't want to "brag" about it, Adele was uncomfortable being in a group her best friend was not in.</p> <p>All children thought it was a privilege to be in the group and enjoyed the trips.</p>

Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
8 out of 8 child participants	There were mixed ideas about how other children reacted to them being in a gifted and talented group.	<p>Being in the group was linked to good behaviour.</p> <p>Shaai: <i>They probably feel like they want to have a turn as well. But some children probably feel they don't really do much, so what's the point of being good and going into this. But some children do try their best but can't like... hold their anger in if something goes on that they don't like.....</i> (C, I) Frederick didn't mind other children being in the group as they helped him with the work.</p> <p>Delia thought whilst her friends were</p>

		<p>supportive, other children got jealous when they went on trips.</p> <p>Adele wanted criteria for selection to be broader, but is dismissive of children who were jealous, thinking that they were not chosen due to a lack of effort on their part: <i>Well the people who don't usually learn, they look at the gifted and talented children and they sometimes think it's OK to come up to those children and ask what they had to do because they wasn't listening.</i> (C, I)</p>
2 of 8 child participants	Views of talented children not in the gifted group.	<p>Olu (who does not go on trips) believes the selected children deserve it as they behave well and work hard. Once he heard a child ask the teachers about these trips, and the teacher replied that it was for children who behaved themselves.</p> <p>Tobi (talented, not gifted) felt proud of being in the same class as the gifted children.</p>
2 of 6 gifted children	Attitude of gifted children towards classmates.	<p>Selina thought the gifted trips were not really the kind of trips most children would enjoy, because they tended to be about “feelings”, where most children would prefer “fun” trips, like Thorpe Park. However she tried to be sensitive to their feelings and not “rub their faces in it.”</p> <p>Delia thought that even if some people might wish to go on trips, “some probably feel like I don’t want to go on that.”</p>
8 out of 8 child participants	All child participants believed their parents were proud of them, even if they had not been told so.	<p>Sometimes they know how their parents feel from the support they have shown, particularly when it follows the interests of their parents. Some parents tease them to show their pride such as Olu’s.</p> <p><i>They feel proud, because when I get chosen all the time they're like "How many times are you going to get chosen to go to trips?"</i> (C, I)</p> <p>Shai’s parents were proud as they gave her gifts when she had tried her best in school.</p>
3 out of 3 parents	All parents expressed happiness at their child being identified as gifted and talented.	<p>One parent expressed surprise as her child had English as an Additional Language, and expected this to be a barrier.</p> <p>The parents reported a sense of pride in their children’s achievements.</p>

Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
5 out of 26 participants	Worried that gifted and talented provision denies other children of opportunities.	<p>Not a universal view. Tom (a Teaching Assistant) felt he may be in a minority when he spoke of the opportunities he gave to gifted and talented children.</p> <p><i>But my argument was, well, if say a child is good at something, then why should they be left out because someone isn't, just to</i></p>

		<i>give that person a chance? But they didn't really cotton on to that. So I always think, yes, you could have the odd child that isn't necessarily where they should be, but they would benefit the team. But I would never ever leave somebody out who is excelling in that sport, just to take somebody else's place. Because then you are also disadvantaging that child from progressing as well. It's a tough call, because you want to keep everybody happy, but someone's got to miss out at some point. (TA, I)</i>
7 out of 12 teachers and teaching assistants	There is a conflict of needs, with lower ability children taking more of adults' time.	Some said gifted and talented children could be relied on to work independently, so adults could work with children in the lower ability groups, although one teacher felt that middle ability children missed out more. One teacher pointed out that the best teachers used to teach the more able, but now are used to work with lower attainers, as their knowledge helps them break down the learning better.
Number of participants Involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
6 out of 9 teachers 3 out of 3 teaching assistants 2 out of 3 senior managers 1 out of 3 parents	Believe identification is important.	Beatrice: I think they do need identifying because I think they do need to be catered for because I think that it's not fair for them - there's no point to them doing work that is too easy. I think it's still important that they get it cos I mean, I can remember being bored at school. (T, I) Pavla: I think it is very easy for a child whose abilities are not recognised - or maybe at home - to kind of squash them and never develop them, and it is a waste. It is just a terrible waste. (T, I) Other teachers felt that it was part of meeting every child's needs, such as Danielle, who also clearly felt some misgivings in identifying this group, when she stated: What goes through my mind is do we want to define them? (M, I)
3 out of 9 teachers 1 out of 3 senior managers 3 out of 3 teaching assistants 1 out of 3 parents	Have a desire to find what a child is good at – maybe even for a future career.	Charlotte saw it as important in terms of provision: Because then you would be able to totally push those children with an underlying high ability in the right direction. Perhaps sometimes by not wasting their time on stuff that they don't really need to know, if that makes sense. (M, I) 4 teachers, 2 teaching assistants and 1 parent also commented on the need to nurture a talent, and recognise the importance this has on the child's self-esteem.

<p>3 out of 9 teachers 1 out of 3 senior managers</p>	<p>Held views of intelligence as being fixed.</p>	<p>Spoke of the type of intake, and that 'gifted and talented' pupils is not an absolute description, - rather an internal comparison e.g. Beatrice: The top levels I've got in my class are 2b and they're supposed to be 2b at the end of the year, so they are on track, but they're only kind of 9 months ahead of where they should be. So it's not gifted and talented as a leafy school in Surrey for example, who would have some really bright children who would be a couple of years in advance. We haven't really got many children like that in this school. (T, I)</p>
<p>4 out of 9 teachers 1 out of 3 teaching assistants</p>	<p>They believed that early identification is important to nurture talent through appropriate interventions.</p>	<p>Tom: So I suppose if they were identified earlier on, then by the time they get to Year 6 [the final year in primary school before transition to secondary school] they would be even better sort of thing. Because then you'd be able to work with them at an earlier stage. So I suppose that's one thing we could improve on, yeah. (TA, I) Faith: Perhaps I am wrong but that is how I see gifted and talented. If the child has got the aptitude for something then it is about what we are doing to build that, to the maximum. (T, I)</p>
<p>4 out of 9 teachers</p>	<p>Did not believe that giftedness is a permanent state</p>	<p>Melanie: But I don't think when they are 15, you will be able to say "Oh yes they have a gift for numeracy" or whatever. (T, I)</p>

Findings from the interview data for the theme ‘Challenges’

Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
4 out of 14 school staff participants	Thought behaviour was a barrier to learning for the most able.	<p>Jessica had a particularly challenging class, and marvelled at the way gifted and talented pupils were able to work and achieve well. She consequently organised groupings more for promoting good behaviour than ability.</p> <p>Stephen thought this had an impact on the way teachers taught in the school, which may not have been beneficial to the gifted children in the class, in that teachers tend to stick to teaching methods that would be favourable to managing behaviour, when he explained: <i>Something like that, you have to be very wary, because there are gifted children who don't ask questions. They're afraid to or don't want to bother the teacher. They've been trained to think it's the thing to do.....Because the teachers spend so long in school telling children "Please be quiet", the well-behaved children become extra, extra quiet?</i> (M, I)</p> <p>Charlotte spoke of some children behaving well in sports activities but not applying these principles at other times. There was a perception that generally the gifted and talented children were the better behaved children however, and that they therefore deserved some of the perks associated with this status, such as trips out. As Natalie said of the need for them to be given more adult time: <i>You know they have that need that has not been met as much. The dynamics of the classroom are sometimes what stops us from giving that support to the gifted and talented children and it depends when we are in the class and what lesson it is.</i> (TA,I)</p>
3 out of 9 teachers 12 out of 3 parents	Lack of time was seen as another barrier in the provision of gifted education.	<p>Pavla: <i>So just to make sure that they get what they need at school as well. It is not easy. I think it is the time factor most of the time.</i> (T, I) One teacher felt that lack of time led to only “scratching the surface” of the talents of their children. Another felt that teachers had to rely on giving gifted children “another sheet”, which she felt was not enough, and that they needed more teacher input. Lack of time was also a concern for parents. For example, Shaai’s mother said: <i>That’s your only big worry is about whether or not Shaai is able to get as much time of the teacher as she would like devoted to her level.</i> (P, I)</p>

4 out of 8 child participants	Poor behaviour as an obstacle better provision.	As has already been stated, thought that the gifted and talented trips were a reward for their good behaviour. Adele: <i>Me and my friends, I don't really know how we can survive in this environment of behaviour</i> (C, I)
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Findings from the interview data for the theme ‘participants’ wishes’

Number of participants involved	Opinion of participant	Evidence
5 out of 9 teachers	Wished for more training	Felt they lacked knowledge in this area. Realised that teachers would benefit from more ideas in working with this group of pupils.
6 out of 9 teachers 1 out of 3 senior managers 1 out of 3 teaching assistants 1 out of 3 parents	Felt they needed more resources	5 wanted more practical resources such as a bank of resources to teach gifted and talented pupils. 1 parent and 3 members wanted more adults to give gifted pupils more attention and targeted activities. Faith wanted to see peripatetic teachers with special expertise teaching gifted children in their domain. Paula wanted to see more challenging physical resources in the playground. 2 teachers would have liked more ICT resources for these pupils. 1 teacher and 1 parent simply wanted more time to devote to gifted and talented pupils. 2 parents wanted their child to be pushed more in school and 1 wanted more focus on acceleration, not just on enrichment. A third parent wanted separate ability groups and more competitions. 7 members of staff wished for more extracurricular activities of all types. Pavla recalled Gifted and Talented Olympics from her childhood where children competed with gifted children from other local schools in their domain of giftedness. She believed that this gave children recognition for their talent, whilst teaching them how to lose. Peter wanted to see projects involving business links.
5 out of 9 teachers	Wanted interventions aimed at gifted pupils	For some, this would involve an outside route, working with other children who were highly able in their domain. Others wanted interventions in school, where their needs could be focused on, incorporating a greater number of domains of giftedness. 1 teacher said that she would like the whole curriculum to be expanded to encompass a broader range of skills and knowledge.
2 out of 9 teachers 1 out of 3 teaching assistants 1 out of 3 parents	Expressed a desire that gifted pupils would feel proud of their ability and status, believing it would boost their self-esteem.	Staff are concerned that gifted and talented pupils may ‘downplay’ their talent, or be embarrassed about it. 1 parent wanted identification to be less formalised so that the gifted and talented pupils were not made to stand out.

2 of 8 child participants	Wanted changes to the school environment.	Olu wanted bigger classrooms Adele wanted a mural 3 children wanted more gifted and talented trips, although had no new ideas about what these should be 3 children wanted more after school clubs and enrichment activities – Shaai wanted more at lunchtime to accommodate who could not stay after school
5 of 8 child participants	Would like more challenging lessons.	1 child wanted more problem-solving and investigative activities.
7 of 8 child participants	Wished behaviour in class would improve.	<i>Adele: I don't really know how we can survive in this environment of behaviour. But we end up fighting it away because if we turn not very nice then that would just spread a bad reputation for the school, and we don't want that to happen. We're trying our best not to go...be mean and bad to each other. (C, I)</i>