

Richard Challoner School: Gifted and Talented Policy

Introduction

Each person is recognised as a child of God: an individual who is encouraged to develop his/her God given talents, a sense of worth and to reach his/her full potential.

At Richard Challoner School, we aim to identify the needs and talents of each individual student and to provide appropriate opportunities for them to develop their potential. This includes the most able students in the school.

We therefore aim to identify these students as quickly as possible, in conjunction with parents, utilising staff expertise in this area and the range of data available to us. Throughout the school community, we endeavour to promote a positive attitude towards the abilities and talents of our students, and to ensure that all staff and parents are aware of the Gifted and Talented policy.

Definitions

The DfES provides the following definitions of gifted and talented students:

'gifted' learners as those who have abilities in one or more subjects in the statutory school curriculum other than art and design, music and PE;

'talented' learners as those with a specific ability in a more practical area:

<i>Physical Talent</i>	Sports, games, physical skill
<i>Visual / Performing Abilities</i>	Movement, dance, drama
<i>Mechanical Ingenuity</i>	Drawing, designing, construction, object assembly (& disassembly), practical problem solving
<i>Outstanding Leadership</i>	Organiser, outstanding team member, sound judgements
<i>Socially/ ethically gifted</i>	Sensitivity, empathy, well developed sense of the moral implications of actions or situations
<i>Creativity</i>	Artistic, musical, linguistic
<i>Problem solving</i>	Chess, lateral thinking, creative solutions, ability to grasp the big picture and work with it

Although the DfES's Excellence in Cities programme targets gifted and talented work at the top 5 to 10 per cent of pupils in any school, regardless of the overall ability profile of pupils, Richard Challoner School recognises that each cohort of students is unique and that the number of pupils who may be defined as gifted and/or talented may be greater or lesser than this in any one year.

Identification

The gifted and talented are a diverse group and their range of attainment will be varied, as can be seen from the 'definitions' section above. It is important to recognise that not all gifted and talented learners are obvious achievers. Many actually underachieve - their potential is masked by factors such as frustration, low self-esteem, lack of challenge, or low teacher/parent expectations. Others underachieve because they have learning disabilities that obscure or eclipse their gifts or talents.

In order to achieve as comprehensive an identification process as possible, Richard Challoner School encourages the use of a variety of methods. Usually, the identification procedure will include elements of the following:

- Teacher nomination
- Assessment results
- Parental nomination

A database of all those nominated for gifted and talented status will be maintained and regularly updated. This will enable the coordinator to have an overview of students nominated in individual subject areas and to disseminate information about these students to the whole staff.

Provision within the classroom

Richard Challoner aims to provide an effective learning environment for all students, as it is only within such an environment that everyone, including Gifted and Talented students, will be enabled to fulfil their potential.

Like all learners, the gifted and talented need frequent opportunities to apply their skills and understanding, and to develop their knowledge, within a secure and flexible learning environment. Teachers at Richard Challoner have a responsibility to encourage a learning culture that:

- values learners' own interests and learning styles;
- encourages independence and autonomy, and supports learners in using their initiative;
- encourages learners to be open to ideas and initiatives presented by others;
- encourages connections across subjects or aspects of the learning programme;
- links learning to wider applications;
- encourages the use of a variety of resources, ideas, methods and tasks;
- involves learners in working in a range of settings and contexts - as individuals, in pairs, in groups, and as a class;
- encourages learners to reflect on the process of their own learning and to understand the factors that help them to make progress.

Under the National Curriculum schools are required to 'plan suitably challenging work'. Teachers within each department will therefore be:

- clear about what constitutes high-level performance;
- able to set differentiated tasks that give opportunities for higher-order thinking skills
- proficient in the use of formative assessment in order to enable students to facilitate their own progression
- users of a range of questioning techniques
- aware of resources that can be used for broadening (enriching) and deepening (extending) the students' learning experiences

Out-of-class provision

Richard Challoner offers a broad range of extra-curricular activities within the school, which are open to all, but which Gifted and Talented students are particularly encouraged to participate in.

These include:

- Sports – training and matches
- Clubs (chess, writing, debating)
- Music activities (choir, jazz group, brass group, percussion group)
- Competitions (geography, maths, rocket making, master chef)

The school also aims to be aware of externally organised activities suitable to extend the learning of Gifted and Talented students. So, for example, students who meet the required criteria for Warwick University's National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth are put forward for selection and encouraged to participate on the programmes offered.

Monitoring and evaluation

In order to maintain a constant evaluation process of the school's Gifted and Talented policy, as well as to assess more clearly the individual needs of students within the cohort, Richard Challoner School assigns a learning mentor to each student identified as Gifted and Talented. The responsibility of this mentor is to meet with each of their students at least once per term to discuss the student's progress and awareness of targets (self-set as far as possible). The mentor should seek to gain a good understanding of the student's strengths, enthusiasms and desires, in order to be able to assess what needs they may have. This will enable the mentor and co-ordinator to suggest ways in which these needs might be met – either within existing school provision or through links with external bodies.

Each department will nominate a representative responsible for Gifted and Talented who will monitor the opportunities being provided within their department and will liaise as necessary with the Gifted and Talented co-ordinator. The co-ordinator will also have the responsibility for the induction of new members of the teaching staff into the school's policy.

Teachers will be encouraged to discuss the strategies they employ when catering for Gifted and Talented students on a regular basis within departmental meetings, and any that would be useful across departments will be collated and disseminated by the Gifted and Talented co-ordinator in order to maintain and improve awareness of the policy on a school-wide basis.