



Report to: Children's Services, Young People, and Sport Scrutiny Committee

Date: 31st January 2008

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Report No: 16

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Report Title: *Update on developing a strategic approach to embedding Gifted and Talented approaches in the classroom.*

Non Confidential:

(**Non-Confidential**) This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

Purpose:

An update of work done in relation to the strategic approach to the provision for Gifted and Talented pupils.

Recommendations:

- Continued work with Headteachers to improve the Gifted and Talented provision through School Improvement Plans.
- Maintain relationships with key partners to disseminate good practice across the Local Authority.
- Continued development of expertise through use of a lead teachers group.

Background Doc(s):

Summary:

(on its own page

*with background
docs)*

Summary of the report and its purpose

- Bolton Local Authority continues to develop the provision for Gifted and Talented pupils.
- Good progress is being made in the appointment of leading teachers to replace school coordinators.
- Ongoing guidance and support is being provided for schools
- The key focus for all those involved in the Gifted and Talented strategy has now significantly shifted to impact in every classroom

Introduction

Gifted and Talented children are those who have one or more abilities developed to a level significantly ahead of their year group (or with the potential to develop these abilities). Provision for Gifted and Talented pupils can counteract disadvantage. Direct intervention is particularly critical for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to enable them to make full use of their abilities and to raise their aspirations.

DCSF 2008

Bolton Local Authority is committed to ensuring that all Gifted and Talented pupils reach their full potential, whatever their background, through the provision of engaging and challenging lessons. The Gifted and Talented development secondary strategy uses a combined leading teacher and Local Authority consultant group which meets half termly and has been facilitated by the Gifted and Talented coordinators at Canon Slade School. The group is sharing:

- good practice
- coordinates arrangements for summer schools
- sets up master classes
- agrees criteria for the Gifted and Talented schools' register of pupils
- acts upon National Secondary Strategy updates.

Subject specific Gifted and Talented issues are also raised at other meetings run by Local Authority consultants. For primary schools a consultant appointment has been made for January 2008.

Schools have joined the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth based at Warwick University which offers a programme of support, resources and networking for pupils who reach their criteria for Gifted and Talented. Bolton is also part of the North West Gifted and Talented network that shares good practice and National briefings and we attend the National Association for Able Children in Education briefings. Liaison between Bolton School and Ladybridge High School is well established. Researchers at Bolton University ensure Local Authority policies and procedures encompass cutting edge research.

There is no single source of funding for supporting Gifted and Talented initiatives. Schools have used external funding streams.

Current Developments

Traditionally Gifted and Talented strategies in schools have been a diverse menu of enrichment activities: Artists in Schools, theatre visits, residential experiences, master classes etc. The key development is for schools / clusters to appointment leading teachers. A leading teacher's role is to ensure that Gifted and Talented provision is a feature in all lessons. To support the work of the leading teachers, a handbook of guidance and training materials has been written by Bolton's teaching and learning consultants and given to all schools thereby ensuring that impact can be achieved in every classroom. Further support comes from the Department for Children, Schools and Families who have produced a set of quality teaching and learning standards for use in the classroom.

The leading teacher group is a developing forum for them to share good practice and discuss strategies for monitoring impact.

All schools are actively addressing redefining job specifications for leading teachers. Good progress is being made with 40% of schools having appointed leading teachers and the remainder moving towards having staff appointed and protocols agreed by September 2008.

The work of the Local Authority has been commended by the Director (Gifted and Talented) of the National Secondary Strategy. The guidance and training materials have been marketed across all Local Authorities and reviewed favourably in the Times Education Supplement.

A range of further development activities have taken place such as: compiling a portfolio of evidence on Gifted and Talented practice across a whole school, a mentoring programme involving 6th form students from Bolton School and closer links have been established between primary and secondary schools.

Key Points

- Schools are appointing leading teachers who have responsibility for improving Gifted and Talented provision in classrooms.
- The leading teacher group is facilitated by Canon Slade School.
- Bolton is responding well to the National Strategy guidance materials where there is an emphasis on taking a more strategic role in relation to embedding effective teaching strategies in classrooms.
- Primary and secondary strategies are being aligned.
- The partnerships with Bolton School and Bolton University are rich relationships.
- Schools are updating their Gifted and Talented registers of pupils to ensure that International New Arrivals, pupils who have English as an Additional Language and Vulnerable and Looked After Children are all appropriately placed on the registers.

Equality Impact Assessment

This report does not require an EIA as it is not seeking a policy change from the Formal Executive Members.