



Westfield Sports College

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WESTFIELD SPORTS COLLEGE

Trust and Foundation

Gifted and Talented Policy

Date of Policy:	Spring 2009
Staff Responsible:	S Smith
Date of Review:	Spring 2011
Date of next review:	Spring 2012

Aims and Values

Westfield Sports College aims to enable every student to realise their potential through quality provision of learning opportunities. This does not mean that all students should have the same curriculum experience. All students should be challenged and provision at every level needs to be in the light of understanding students' strengths and weaknesses.

Particularly gifted or talented students have differing special needs, it is not enough to think that the most able will succeed simply because they have ability or talent. In addressing their needs through curriculum challenge and enhancement, we are developing the expertise and opportunities for staff and students alike and furthering our commitment to personalised learning.

The Gifted and Talented initiative at Westfield will aim to raise the profile of success in many spheres, combat negative attitudes to education, thus assisting the College as a whole to raise achievement for everyone.

Objectives

To provide a personalised curriculum where possible or pockets of personalised learning experiences that are challenging and rewarding to ensure that more able students achieve their full potential

To identify individual talents and needs and find creative ways of providing for them

To foster intellectual curiosity beyond the taught curriculum

To provide increasingly divergent opportunities to allow for "hidden" talents and abilities

To celebrate the academic success, talent and initiative of the students of Westfield

To offer enrichment experiences beyond the usual take up of activities in the area

To nurture positive role models as examples to others in terms of student leadership initiatives within College.

Definition

A Westfield **gifted** student is one who demonstrates a significantly higher level of ability than most Westfield students of the same age in the statutory curriculum or is identified as having high potential through CAT scores and prior performance data such as Fisher Family Trust, APS. These are some indicators used for identification but they are not exhaustive.

A Westfield **talented** student is one who can demonstrate a high level of skills in sport, dance, drama, art or music.

We should also consider ambition and opportunity in both the gifted and talented areas. Ambition and drive are key components of success, where a student demonstrates these qualities despite lack of previous data or evidence it may be worth considering them as part

of the College or Faculty cohort. (For example a student from another country may lack the prior evidence of achievement but have the determination to succeed). Similarly, lack of opportunity may have held back budding talent. It is therefore incumbent on the College to be alert to potential and seek ways to find and develop such talent.

It is worth noting that gifted students do not fit into a neat category and can be:

- good all-rounders
- high achievers in one area
- of high ability with low motivation
- of good verbal ability but poor writing skills
- very able with a short attention span
- very able with poor social skills
- keen to disguise their abilities

(Deborah Eyre, 1993)

Equally, talented performers may be good all rounders or activity specific.

Identification

Our **College cohort** is approximately 10% of the College population and is identified in the following ways:

- Students demonstrating high performance within the taught curriculum - identified through the College's achievement data
- Students who according to data or independent referral (e.g. parents/carers, teachers, self or peer referral, agencies or organisations outside the College) have much potential
- Students nominated as talented by either the performing and creative arts faculty or the PE department
- The College cohort will reflect the gender and ethnicity balance of the College
- The College cohort will be reviewed annually; students may be added or removed from the cohort. The list will be kept in the staff shared data drive and be utilised as an organic document.
- Student Success Leaders and Learning Specialists, in conjunction with the gifted and talented co-ordinator will be responsible for reviewing the cohort
- The College's gifted and talented cohort and the individual department's cohort will be identified in all teachers' planners

Our **Faculty cohorts** are likely to include most of the College cohort, although where there are talented but not gifted students - they may not appear on an academic faculty cohort and vice versa. Faculty lists will include all students whom they considers high achievers or students who have potential but are currently underachieving or who have not yet realised their potential for whatever reason. Referrals will be made by all staff to the student's success leader in each faculty who will inform the main Gifted and talented list of the college. This will overseen by the Head of each Hall.

Curriculum requirements

Each Faculty must:

- Have a policy statement which is in line with College policy
- Have agreed criteria for identifying ability or talent in that particular curriculum area
- Review and amend the Faculty cohort annually and report this to the gifted and talented co-ordinator
- Have appropriate curriculum challenge built into each scheme of learning.
- Have a designated teacher (Student Success leader) to liaise with the gifted and talented co-ordinator
- Have clear strategies for working with underachievers
- Ensure that within the College's target setting procedures, individual students are set suitably challenging targets and the faculty has a collective gifted / talented target (e.g. level 7s or A or A*)
- Monitor the progress of their gifted and talented cohort
- Evaluate the impact of faculty gifted and talented initiatives and discuss with the gifted and talented co-ordinator "value for money"
- Offer opportunities beyond the curriculum to enrich learning and develop intellectual curiosity

Strategies

Emphasis must be in the classroom in order to affect the every day learning of the most able and concurrently the rest of our students. Add on activities are enriching and beneficial, but if we are to encourage students to be independent thinkers and learners the greatest impact is to be achieved in a classroom context. We recognise however that specific talents will need to be fostered outside the classroom.

In the classroom

There are a variety of strategies that we can all employ in the classroom that will get the most from our most able.

What we must do is:

- be aware of prior knowledge, understanding and skills students have so as to avoid repetition of work that is extremely de-motivating (more challenging work rather than just more)
- be aware that there is peer pressure to under-achieve.
- be alert for the 'bright but lazy' student who could achieve excellent results if motivated and challenged.
- be aware of the danger of assuming that more able students are easier to teach than other students.

As well as a variety of differentiation techniques (outcome, task, grouping, questioning, individual target setting and differentiating homework) we should be encouraging students to become independent thinkers and learners by:

- organising their own work
- taking into account the progress already made by the student

- offering open ended situations
- employing different levels of language, especially in one to one situations
- providing less instruction for the more able student
- allowing experimentation
- carrying out unaided tasks which stretch their capabilities
- making choices about their work
- developing the ability to evaluate their work and so become self critical

Students' abilities should be recognised and valued. Appreciation of their achievement makes an important contribution to their development.

At Westfield we believe that provision in the classroom is of the greatest importance and an enrichment programme that eats substantially into classroom time is detrimental. Hence the majority of enrichment activities should ideally take place after College or in the holidays through extended service initiatives.

Informing Students and Parents/Carers

Informing parents/carers and the students themselves is an important process in developing gifted and talented students because:

- it increases students' expectations
- it increases parents/carers' expectations
- it builds a home / College partnership
- it educates parents about education
- it fosters parental support for enrichment activities

From the academic year 2008, parents/carers of the gifted and talented year 7 cohort (and subsequent years) will be informed by letter that their daughter / son has been identified as gifted and talented and invited to a College event to further discuss the opportunities. Subsequently they will receive a standardised letter on a yearly basis confirming progress or inviting them to College to discuss under - performance. Parents/carers will be encouraged to take part or develop enrichment activities.

Faculties may wish to consider informing parents/carers of their faculty cohorts - they need to be clear about the programme they offer. Please liaise with Mrs G M Black before any letter is sent home.

This development with parents is new and potentially problematic. It will be carefully evaluated and inform the next policy review.

Funding

If departments, individuals or different groups of teachers wish to improve or enhance the provision for gifted and talented students in any way, they can submit a project bid to the gifted and talented co-ordinator via a short email of 500 words. All bids must be costed with clear success criteria (measurable if possible), be supported by their line manager and be within the spirit of the objectives of the gifted and talented initiative.

Monitoring

During the academic year a data base will be compiled logging the activities and outcomes of the College cohort (information to be transferred via SIMS to the LA). Any project within the College or network which is funded via the gifted and talented initiative will also be logged, thus tracking the activities gained by students on the College or department cohorts.