

Course Guidance

Objectives

- To put the teaching of able pupils in the context of the school
- To alert teachers to ways of identifying able pupils
- To improve planning for abler pupils by reinterpreting objectives
- To promote teaching and learning strategies that support and challenge able pupils

Resources

- Presentation PowerPoint
- Guidance Notes (this documents)
- Pre-course Materials
- Identifying able geographers info sheet

Session outline 1hr

- Introduction – PowerPoint Presentation (15 minutes)
- Reviewing criteria used to identify able geographers (10mins)
- Brainstorm ideas of developing G&T provision (10mins)
- Extension – Review PoS to assess existing provision and identify areas of future development (15mins)
- Agree programme of action (10mins)

Pre-course task

At least two weeks before the session, inform participants that they should bring with them to the session a list of 6 pupils who they feel are gifted are geographer with reasoning for their selection.

Who are the Gifted and Talented?

Gifted and talented learners are defined those who have one or more abilities developed to a level significantly ahead of their year group (or with the potential to develop those abilities).

Gifted describes learners who have the ability to excel academically in one or more subjects such as English, drama, technology;

Talented describes learners who have the ability to excel in practical skills such as sport, leadership, artistic performance, or in an applied skill.

Why should your Geography Department have a G&T Programme?

Providing for gifted and talented learners in our schools is a matter of equity - as with all other pupils they have a right to an education that is suited to their needs and abilities, to allow them to fulfil their true potential. The vision for any Geography department's G&T programme should be to ensure that their gifted geographers are given the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The 2005 White Paper, *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* set out the Government's ambition that every pupil - including the gifted and talented should have the right personalised support to reach the limits of their capabilities. For gifted and talented pupils this means:

- stretch and challenge in every classroom and in every school
- opportunities to further their particular abilities outside school

Identifying your Gifted Geographers

General characteristics of gifted learning

The following characteristics (taken from the 1998 Ofsted review of research by Joan Freeman) are not necessarily proof of high ability but they may alert teachers to the need to enquire further into an individual's learning patterns and ability levels.

He or she may:

- be a good reader;
- be very articulate or verbally fluent for their age;
- give quick verbal responses (which can appear cheeky);
- have a wide general knowledge;
- learn quickly;
- be interested in topics which one might associate with an older child;
- communicate well with adults – often better than with their peer group;
- have a range of interests, some of which are almost obsessions;
- show unusual and original responses to problem-solving activities;
- prefer verbal to written activities;
- be logical;
- be self-taught in his/her own interest areas;
- have an ability to work things out in his/her head very quickly;
- have a good memory that s/he can access easily;
- have strong views and opinions;
- have a lively and original imagination/sense of humour;
- be very sensitive and aware;
- focus on his/her own interests rather than on what is being taught;
- be socially adept;
- appear arrogant or socially inept;
- be easily bored by what they perceive as routine tasks;
- show a strong sense of leadership;
- not necessarily appear to be well-behaved, or
- well liked by others.

Identification methods

Schools and individual departments have the discretion to decide how best to identify their gifted and talented pupils but are likely to obtain the best results by drawing on a wide range of information sources, including both qualitative and quantitative information.

Pupils who are gifted in geography are likely to:

- **understand concepts clearly so that they can apply this understanding to new situations in order to make interpretations, develop hypotheses, reach conclusions and explore solutions** they understand geographical ideas and theories, and apply them to real situations;
- **communicate effectively using both the written and spoken word** they communicate knowledge, ideas and understanding in ways that are appropriate to the task and audience (for example, writing formal letters and reports, producing brochures representing particular groups). They learn subject-specific vocabulary, use it accurately and are able to define words;
- **reason, argue and think logically, showing an ability to manipulate abstract symbols and recognise patterns and sequences** they use and apply mathematical principles (such as area, shape, spatial distribution) and formulae (such as Spearman's rank correlation coefficient) to solve geographical tasks and problems. They identify their own geographical questions and establish sequences of investigation. They understand, and are able to explain, complex processes and interrelationships (for example, within and between physical and human environments);
- **enjoy using graphs, charts, maps, diagrams and other visual methods to present information** they transform relief shown by contour lines into three-dimensional models in their minds. They are competent and confident in using the wide range of visual resources required in geography -- aerial photographs, satellite images, maps of different types and scales, GIS systems and so on;
- **be confident and contribute effectively when taking part in less formal teaching situations** they take part readily in role-play situations or simulations and enjoy contributing to outdoor fieldwork;
- **relate well to other people, showing an ability to lead, manage and influence others, appreciating and understanding others' views, attitudes and feelings.** they are willing to share their knowledge and understanding, and steer discussion;
- **have a more highly developed value system than most pupils of their age** they have well-considered opinions on issues such as the environment and the inequalities of life in different places;
- **have a wide-ranging general knowledge about the world** they have good knowledge of where places are in the world and of topical issues;
- **be able to transfer knowledge from one subject to another** they transfer their knowledge of physics, for example, to understanding climate. Or they transfer knowledge of the industrial revolution from history to help explain the location of industry in the UK;
- **be creative and original in their thinking, frequently going beyond the obvious solution to a problem** for example, if faced with the problem of storm pipes being unable to cope with sudden storm surges in an area, they might suggest taking measures like afforestation to reduce storm surges, rather than proposing technical improvements to the pipe system. If faced with the problem of congested roads, they might suggest taxing cars more heavily, improving public transport or changing land use patterns, rather than building bigger roads.

Personalisation: from Identification to Practice

Personalised learning is about tailoring education to individual need, interest and aptitude so as to ensure that every learner achieves and reaches the highest standards possible.

For gifted and talented learners this includes:

- Effective assessment for learning, so that planning takes account of prior learning, stretching curricular targets are set with pupils, and differentiated learning objectives and outcomes are shared;
- Learning activities in the classroom which offer additional stretch through a combination of acceleration, enrichment and extension;
- Opportunities for independent learning, and use of a range of learning styles;
- Learning in settings beyond the classroom, for example in real-life contexts which support problem-solving and application of knowledge and skills;
- Support in specific areas, for example through language support or mentoring, alongside increased challenge in areas of strength; and
- Above all, a rich provision for all, which provides further opportunities for identification.

Are you meeting the needs of your Gifted Geographers?

At secondary level it is expected that individual subject departments will have their own policy for developing gifted pupils in their subject areas. The checklist below could be used to help visualise your department's present provision:

Do you have a broad, balanced curriculum for gifted individuals? For example:

have they experienced a wide range of teaching and learning processes?

are they able to access and use a sufficiently wide range of resources and equipment for independent study? (these might need to be from the next key stage)

do they have first-hand experience of the work of appropriate people in the community? (for example a planning officer, members of environmental groups, council members, subject-specialist teachers from the next key stage)

do older pupils have access to recent national publications from National Geographic and the Geographical Association?

Are gifted individuals challenged sufficiently to develop their own skills, knowledge and understanding?

What opportunities do you give them to apply their skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of contexts? For example, when gifted pupils can already

use six-figure grid references effectively on 1:50,000 OS or 1:25,000 OS maps, do you give them an opportunity to use this skill with a map of different scales, say 1:10,000 or 1:1250, which requires them to use and cope with scale changes in measuring and interpreting symbols?

Do you give gifted pupils opportunities to work on their own or with others of similar ability to devise and follow their own plans and ideas, test ideas and problems, explore different ways of depicting feelings, values and attitudes, take risks without prior knowledge of outcomes, and change ideas en route to accommodate new influences? This does not mean that gifted pupils should work without supervision; the teacher should always be aware of their progress and difficulties and be prepared to intervene, more as facilitator than director.

What opportunities are gifted pupils given to evaluate their own work, and to identify their strengths and weaknesses, so they can improve their own learning? Are they aware of the processes of learning (metacognition) that would help them? Are teachers aware of how they can support the development of metacognition?

Do you maintain records of the achievements of gifted pupils year on year?

Do you compare the performance in geography of pupils who are gifted in the subject with their performance in other areas of the curriculum?

Identifying your Gifted Geographers

General characteristics of gifted learning

The following characteristics (taken from the 1998 Ofsted review of research by Joan Freeman) are not necessarily proof of high ability but they may alert teachers to the need to enquire further into an individual's learning patterns and ability levels.

He or she may:

- be a good reader;
- be very articulate or verbally fluent for their age;
- give quick verbal responses (which can appear cheeky);
- have a wide general knowledge;
- learn quickly;
- be interested in topics which one might associate with an older child;
- communicate well with adults – often better than with their peer group;
- have a range of interests, some of which are almost obsessions;
- show unusual and original responses to problem-solving activities;
- prefer verbal to written activities;
- be logical;
- be self-taught in his/her own interest areas;
- have an ability to work things out in his/her head very quickly;
- have a good memory that s/he can access easily;
- have strong views and opinions;
- have a lively and original imagination/sense of humour;
- be very sensitive and aware;
- focus on his/her own interests rather than on what is being taught;

- be socially adept;
- appear arrogant or socially inept;
- be easily bored by what they perceive as routine tasks;
- show a strong sense of leadership;
- not necessarily appear to be well-behaved, or
- well liked by others.

Identification methods

Schools and individual departments have the discretion to decide how best to identify their gifted and talented pupils but are likely to obtain the best results by drawing on a wide range of information sources, including both qualitative and quantitative information.

Pupils who are gifted in geography are likely to:

- **understand concepts clearly so that they can apply this understanding to new situations in order to make interpretations, develop hypotheses, reach conclusions and explore solutions** they understand geographical ideas and theories, and apply them to real situations;
- **communicate effectively using both the written and spoken word** they communicate knowledge, ideas and understanding in ways that are appropriate to the task and audience (for example, writing formal letters and reports, producing brochures representing particular groups). They learn subject-specific vocabulary, use it accurately and are able to define words;
- **reason, argue and think logically, showing an ability to manipulate abstract symbols and recognise patterns and sequences** they use and apply mathematical principles (such as area, shape, spatial distribution) and formulae (such as Spearman's rank correlation coefficient) to solve geographical tasks and problems. They identify their own geographical questions and establish sequences of investigation. They understand, and are able to explain, complex processes and interrelationships (for example, within and between physical and human environments);
- **enjoy using graphs, charts, maps, diagrams and other visual methods to present information** they transform relief shown by contour lines into three-dimensional models in their minds. They are competent and confident in using the wide range of visual resources required in geography -- aerial photographs, satellite images, maps of different types and scales, GIS systems and so on;
- **be confident and contribute effectively when taking part in less formal teaching situations** they take part readily in role-play situations or simulations and enjoy contributing to outdoor fieldwork;
- **relate well to other people, showing an ability to lead, manage and influence others, appreciating and understanding others' views, attitudes and feelings.** they are willing to share their knowledge and understanding, and steer discussion;
- **have a more highly developed value system than most pupils of their age** they have well-considered opinions on issues such as the environment and the inequalities of life in different places;
- **have a wide-ranging general knowledge about the world** they have good knowledge of where places are in the world and of topical issues;
- **be able to transfer knowledge from one subject to another** they transfer their knowledge of physics, for example, to understanding climate. Or they transfer knowledge of the industrial revolution from history to help explain the location of industry in the UK;
- **be creative and original in their thinking, frequently going beyond the obvious solution to a problem** for example, if faced with the problem of storm pipes being unable to cope with sudden storm surges in an area, they might suggest taking measures like afforestation to reduce storm surges, rather than proposing technical improvements to the pipe system. If faced with the problem of congested roads, they might suggest taxing cars more heavily, improving public transport or changing land use patterns, rather than building bigger roads.

Personalisation: from Identification to Practice

Personalised learning is about tailoring education to individual need, interest and aptitude so as to ensure that every learner achieves and reaches the highest standards possible.

For gifted and talented learners this includes:

- Effective assessment for learning, so that planning takes account of prior learning, stretching curricular targets are set with pupils, and differentiated learning objectives and outcomes are shared;
- Learning activities in the classroom which offer additional stretch through a combination of acceleration, enrichment and extension;
- Opportunities for independent learning, and use of a range of learning styles;
- Learning in settings beyond the classroom, for example in real-life contexts which support problem-solving and application of knowledge and skills;
- Support in specific areas, for example through language support or mentoring, alongside increased challenge in areas of strength; and
- Above all, a rich provision for all, which provides further opportunities for identification.

Are you meeting the needs of your Gifted Geographers?

At secondary level it is expected that individual subject departments will have their own policy for developing gifted pupils in their subject areas. The checklist below could be used to help visualise your department's present provision:

Do you have a broad, balanced curriculum for gifted individuals? For example:

have they experienced a wide range of teaching and learning processes?

are they able to access and use a sufficiently wide range of resources and equipment for independent study? (these might need to be from the next key stage)

do they have first-hand experience of the work of appropriate people in the community? (for example a planning officer, members of environmental groups, council members, subject-specialist teachers from the next key stage)

do older pupils have access to recent national publications from National Geographic and the Geographical Association?

Are gifted individuals challenged sufficiently to develop their own skills, knowledge and understanding?

What opportunities do you give them to apply their skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of contexts? For example, when gifted pupils can already

use six-figure grid references effectively on 1:50,000 OS or 1:25,000 OS maps, do you give them an opportunity to use this skill with a map of different scales, say 1:10,000 or 1:1250, which requires them to use and cope with scale changes in measuring and interpreting symbols?

Do you give gifted pupils opportunities to work on their own or with others of similar ability to devise and follow their own plans and ideas, test ideas and problems, explore different ways of depicting feelings, values and attitudes, take risks without prior knowledge of outcomes, and change ideas en route to accommodate new influences? This does not mean that gifted pupils should work without supervision; the teacher should always be aware of their progress and difficulties and be prepared to intervene, more as facilitator than director.

What opportunities are gifted pupils given to evaluate their own work, and to identify their strengths and weaknesses, so they can improve their own learning? Are they aware of the processes of learning (metacognition) that would help them? Are teachers aware of how they can support the development of metacognition?

Do you maintain records of the achievements of gifted pupils year on year?

Do you compare the performance in geography of pupils who are gifted in the subject with their performance in other areas of the curriculum?
