

GEMS Westminster School, Sharjah (WSS)

Gifted and Talented Policy 2024 -2025



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1. Introduction

At GEMS we believe in providing the best possible provision for students of all abilities. True inclusion simply means meeting the needs of all individuals, including those identified as Gifted and Talented. As such, our Gifted and Talented provision is coordinated centrally through the Children's Services team and has clear links with all areas of inclusion and wellbeing.

Gifted and Talented provision can be broadly be described under three headings:

- Assessment and Identification
- Provision
- Outcomes

For each of these areas, it's important that our approach is tied firmly to fundamental principles of Gifted and Talented educational research, which is described later in this document. Only through a shared understanding of these fundamentals can we ensure consistent and coherent Gifted and Talented provision.

At GEMS we value individuality and diversity, and this extends to our view of gifts and talents. Traditional academic abilities are obviously crucial for us to foster, but we also seek to identify gifts across a broad spectrum of endeavours including (but not limited to) sport, visual arts, performing arts and coding/programming.

2. Aims

Schools across GEMS aim to:

- ensure all gifted and talented children and young people are identified through carefully considered assessment and evaluation
- deliver consistent stretch and challenge that matches Gifted and Talented pupils' individual needs in the learning environment

- provide enrichment opportunities and exposure to examples of excellence through engaging with innovative projects, private industry, higher education providers and competitions
- carefully track and monitor outcomes for our Gifted and Talented pupils to ensure they are making accelerated progress in their area(s) of strength. This includes tracking leavers' destinations

Through all stages of Gifted and Talented provision, we recognise that the wellbeing of our pupils is paramount. Like all pupils in our care, those identified as being Gifted and Talented may have vulnerabilities and additional needs which need to be monitored and catered for in a timely manner. We recognise that children achieve at their best when feeling safe and free from harm. Stretch and challenge must not come at the cost of physical, mental or emotional wellbeing.

3. Definitions

The following definitions for gifted and talented students are taken directly from the KHDA Inspection Framework and thus align with the UAE vision for education. They are based on the 'Differentiation Model of Giftedness and Talent' (Francoys Gagne) and align with international best practice.

- The term Giftedness refers to 'a student who is in possession of untrained and spontaneously-expressed exceptional natural ability in one or more domain of human ability.' These domains will include intellectual, creative, social, physical abilities. In the case of a gifted student, whilst exceptional potential will be present, they may actually under-achieve.
- The term talented refers to 'a student who has been able to transform their 'giftedness' into exceptional performance'. Talented students will always demonstrate exceptional levels of competence in the specific domains of human ability.
- All gifted students have the potential to be highly able but not all highly-able students are truly gifted.

Common distinctions between the able and gifted child include:

- An able student knows the answer; the gifted learner asks the questions.
- Students are meta-cognitive and self-regulating.
- Gifted and talented students are enthusiastic, innovative, independent, enterprising, effective students, well-focused, analytical, reflective, collaborative and are very clear communicators who are effective.

- Students apply acquired skills, knowledge and understanding confidently and accurately to new learning contexts, both real and abstract.
- Students make meaningful connections between areas of learning and a variety of sources to deepen their understanding of the world.
- An able student works hard to achieve; the gifted learner knows without working hard.
- An able student enjoys school; the gifted learner enjoys self-directed learning.
- An able student has a fine imagination; the gifted learner uses that imagination to experiment with ideas.

4. Fundamental Principles of Gifted and Talented Provision

At GEMS we believe that there are three conditions that need to be met in order for pupils to demonstrate gifted behaviour, and therefore develop talents. These three conditions are Creativity, Task Commitment and Above Average Ability (*Renzulli 1986*).



Creating conditions within our schools that optimise these three conditions epitomises our approach to Gifted and Talented provision. If gifted pupils are given the opportunity to demonstrate creativity, task commitment and we recognise their above average ability, talents will develop rapidly and accelerated progress in their area(s) of strength will occur. As a result, we will see the best possible outcomes for our Gifted and Talented pupils.

5. Identification

Gifted and Talented students at GEMS are considered to be students of exceptional ability who are judged as showing outstanding skill in one or more of the following areas:

- General intellectual ability
- Specific aptitude in one or more academic subjects
- Leadership and interpersonal skills

- Visual arts
- Performing arts
- Sports and athletics
- Technical ability including coding and programming.

Academic Gifted and Talented – CAT4:

Cognitive Abilities Test 4 (CAT4) is used as the foundation for identifying intellectual ability in children aged 6 and above. This is a measure of ability in various elements of reasoning and can therefore be an indicator of innate potential in various academic pursuits. Standardised scores of 127 or above in any battery of the CAT4 assessments indicate that a pupil is within the top 5% of the general population for that area of reasoning.

Pupils who score above 119 in any battery are considered to be in the top 7% of the general population. At GEMS, we use CAT4 to identify our Gifted and Talented pupils in the following ways:

- Students with a CAT4 score of 119-126 in two or more batteries are considered to be **‘Group 1 Gifted and Talented’**
- Students with a CAT4 score of 127 or above in two or more batteries OR have a score of 130 or above in one battery are considered to be **‘Group 2 Gifted and Talented’**.

CAT4 assessments are robust and reliable as long as they are administered consistently and according to the instructions. It is possible that some pupils identified using this measure might not be performing to expected levels against the curriculum. In this case, possible barriers to learning should be investigated including pupil wellbeing, engagement and potential support needs.

When considering the accuracy of the CAT4 data, we must also ensure that those with barriers to access can demonstrate their true ability. For example, schools should ensure they consider their EAL cohort, particularly in relation to verbal reasoning.

Once a child has been identified using the CAT4 assessments and their scores remain high, they should not be removed from the Gifted and Talented list, even if they don’t achieve expected levels against the curriculum.

Academic Gifted and Talented – Curriculum-based Assessment:

GEMS schools cover a range of curriculums and contexts. As such, schools will have their own agreed set of curriculum-based assessments used to measure progress and attainment.

When analysing the data from curriculum assessments, you might identify pupils who are achieving exceptional results without having reached the scores identified above in CAT4 assessments. Schools may choose to identify these pupils as ‘Group 1 Gifted and Talented’ if their results are consistently exceptional.

Academic Gifted and Talented – Professional Judgements:

All assessment-based identification should be moderated using the professional judgement of the teaching staff who work with the pupil and know them well. This moderation should include the consideration of barriers and exceptional circumstances and to identify those who may be on the cusp of being considered 'Gifted and Talented'

Especially in the early years of education (when standardised assessments may not be suitable) professional judgement should be used to identify potential gifts and talents at an early stage. Spontaneous and innate gifts and talents often display themselves during play and first exposure to opportunities, and these should be recognised and monitored by schools.

Moderation should also be an opportunity to consider why some children identified as being academically gifted and talented are not achieving expected levels against the curriculum. In this case, planning should be adjusted to ensure the needs of the pupil are being met (see provision).

Non-Academic Gifted and Talented:

Pupils may express gifts and talents in areas outside traditional academic and intellectual pursuits. These broader gifts and talents can be more challenging to accurately identify as individual schools can lack the context or experience to make accurate judgements in a given area.

GEMS is developing the Gifted and Talented checklist which gives context and benchmarks for high performance across sport, visual arts, performing arts and technology (coding and programming).

Communication and input from the pupils themselves and their families is a vital element of establishing wider gifts and talents and schools should routinely collect information about performance and representation outside the school context.

Once identified, schools should actively seek opportunities to foster and celebrate these gifts and talents.

6. Provision

Individual Planning

Once a pupil has been identified as being Gifted and Talented, an individual plan should be created in conjunction with the pupil, those that work closely with them and their family. At WSS these plans are called Advanced Learning Plan (ALP).

These individual plans should include:

- Details of the pupil's strengths
- Any potential barriers to learning
- Individual targets
- Strategies/actions to enhance their learning and progress

These plans should be reviewed at least twice annually and the school should ensure the plans are accessible to all staff who work with the pupil.

Classroom Stretch and Challenge

GEMS recognises that the most impactful provision for Gifted and Talented pupils should be found in their daily school experience. Stretch and challenge should be provided regularly according to the individual pupils' strength(s) and opportunities should be sought and expanded to provide rich, creative and innovative learning tasks.

Responding to the individual needs of the pupil is vital, but listed below are a list of broad classroom strategies for effective differentiation and adaption for Gifted and Talented pupils.

Classroom Strategies

- Knowing the children you teach is key. Use formative and summative assessment in addition with your knowledge of the pupil to pitch the learning for challenge.
- Avoid having extension tasks set after the main lesson content is complete. Allow gifted and talented pupils to access challenge early.
- Prioritise independent tasks that incorporate the **application** of skills and knowledge.
- Seek opportunities for Gifted and Talented pupils to be creative with their knowledge application. Genuine innovation provides deeper learning and greater opportunities for adaption, feedback and discussion.
- Involve Gifted and Talented pupils in assessing, reflecting, and planning their learning. Ensure they understand their strengths and their next steps for learning.
- Where pupils require knowledge extension, seek resources and opportunities within your own context to ensure accelerated pathways exist.
- Maintain an adaptive approach. Differentiation for Gifted and Talented learners should be consistent and dynamic, responding to need.
- Use questioning to extend knowledge. Plan for questions that encourage higher order thinking.

Building teacher confidence and experience in catering for Gifted and Talented provision in the classroom is key. As such, GEMS has developed a CPD menu for Gifted and Talented provision in the classroom.

Enrichment Opportunities

GEMS schools seek to maximise opportunities for pupils to engage in wide ranging and exciting learning experiences outside the classroom. Gifted and Talented pupils should be exposed to regular opportunities to engage in extension and enrichment tasks that are extra-curricular events. GEMS seeks to build partnerships with private industry, higher education providers and community organisations to expose pupils to new opportunities and content. These may include:

- Competitions and performance events
- Workshops and school visits
- School run Extra-Curricular Activities
- School excursions and trips
- Technology and innovation related events

GEMS publishes an annual calendar of Gifted and Talented enrichment opportunities for schools, co-ordinated by the Head of Gifted and Talented. This is also done in conjunction with the GEMS for Life programme.

7. Outcomes

Through carefully considered identification and provision, we expect our Gifted and Talented pupils to achieve excellent outcomes, particularly in relation to their individual strengths. We measure the effectiveness of our provision through impact, and monitoring outcomes enables us to accurately assess the impact of everything we have in place.

At GEMS, our schools monitor the following in relation to Gifted and Talented pupils:

- Assessment data relating to abilities (CAT4)
- Assessment data relating to performance against the curriculum
- Attainment
- Progress
- Teacher judgements
- Pupil's self-assessment
- The views of the parents/carers
- Wellbeing indicators
- Performance in extra-curricular activities
- Leavers' destinations (eg university offers)

We measure these outcomes by:

- Undertaking work scrutiny
- Visiting lessons
- Analysing assessment data
- Collecting teacher judgements
- Speaking with pupils and families
- Monitoring leavers' destinations
- Collecting examples of wider achievements (outside school)
- Monitoring wellbeing indicators (assessment, engagement, behaviour?)

8. Responsibilities

The Head of Gifted and Talented for GEMS and the wider Children's Services Team has overall responsibility for the GEMS Gifted and Talented programme and the strategic development of this policy. The Head of Gifted and talented supports all schools in delivering the best possible provision and outcomes for Gifted and Talented pupils.

At WSS our SLT & team Inclusion has responsibility for the Gifted and Talented provision within the school. This involves working with the Principal, Heads of Year and specific subject Gifted and Talented nominated members to determine the strategic implementation of this policy.

School Responsibilities:

- G&T students are identified using the agreed criteria
- The G&T Register is accurate and updated at least termly
- The classroom provision for students with G&T is well planned and effective
- Gifted Individual Plans (ALP) are in place to support and monitor student progress and enable teachers to implement strategies to extend learning
- The impact of provision is monitored and evaluated
- Parents and students are kept fully informed of progress and planned provision
- Gifted and Talented pupils are aware of their identification and have a voice in their individual plans
- The records of students with G&T are accurate, updated and in line with policy
- Gifted and Talented professional development is made available to staff
- The SEF reflects accurately the strengths and areas for development of students with G&T.
- All *key stages* have appropriate provision for the G&T within their lesson planning and delivery.
- Individual teachers have access to key information regarding Gifted and Talented individuals and plan differentiated experiences accordingly
- Pupils have access to enrichment opportunities, performances, competitions and other special events to foster their gifts and talents and provide inspiration

9. Links to Other Policies

Inclusion Policy

EAL Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Wellbeing Policy

10. Monitoring Arrangements

This Policy will be reviewed by Principal **every year**. It will also be updated if any changes to the information are made during the year. It will be approved by the governing board.