

GIFTED CHILDREN: GETTING IT RIGHT

15 – 16 April 2004

The Education Review Office: the contribution of evaluation to the education of gifted children

◆ Evaluation indicators

Review officers look for a range of indicators of good practice when evaluating the programmes and teaching of gifted students.

Indicators which regularly appear in review reports include:

- acceptance and understanding of individual difference and diversity;
- senior management staff commitment to the concept of providing for students with special abilities;
- support from the board of trustees, to ensure funding continuity;
- interested, committed and skilled staff involved in the management and running of initiatives for students with special abilities;
- a written policy acknowledging the importance of long term provision for students with special abilities and providing guidelines;
- identification processes using a range of objective and subjective criteria, undertaken at the beginning of the year and on enrolment;
- assessment of individual student learning and support needs;
- thorough documentation of programmes;
- professional development for staff working with students with special abilities;
- a range of options for students with special abilities;
- emphasis on development of generic capabilities such as critical thinking skills and problem solving;
- sensitivity to cultural differences, expectations and needs;
- involvement of or consultation with parents;
- cooperation with local community-based programmes, or programmes operating across a cluster of schools; and
- effective programme evaluation and assessment of the impact of interventions on student achievement.

- ◆ **How deeply is ERO looking? (For instance, if you are told that a school is clustering their gifted students, how closely do you examine the issues such as identification of the gifted, appropriately differentiated curriculum, etc)?**

Review officers look for evidence of documented process or systems for how a school approaches providing for students with special abilities, just as they do with all other aspects of the school's organisation and service delivery. In this area, they seek verification of:

- how students with special abilities are identified;
- how programmes to meet their individual needs are planned (within the classroom and through withdrawal if applicable);
- how their achievement is assessed and reported;
- how the effectiveness of programmes is evaluated and whether this informs future programme planning;
- how programmes are staffed and funded;
- what professional development the teachers involved have received;
- whether the outcomes of programmes for students with special abilities are reported to the board of trustees.

ERO review officers always seek to verify what the school is reporting through checking documentation, talking to students, the principal, staff, trustees and parents, and observing teaching practice.