Identifying Gifted and Talented Pupils - Getting Started

This booklet, along with more extensive information about each of the topics covered here, can be found on the gifted and talented section of the DfES Standards Site:
http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/giftedandtalented/

department for education and skills

Creating Opportunity
Releasing Potential
Achieving Excellence

Government policy on identification of gifted and talented pupils

DfES defines the group supported by the national programme for gifted and talented education as:

"Children and young people with one or more abilities developed to a level significantly ahead of their year group (or with the potential to develop those abilities)".

It follows that we encourage schools in identifying gifted and talented learners to focus on:

- learners who are gifted and talented relative to their peers in their own year group and school (including the top 5% nationally who are eligible for National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) membership);
- a range of abilities including talent in the arts and sport;
- ability rather than achievement, so that underachievers are amongst those identified.

There are gifted and talented learners in every year group in every school. Although we assume a norm of around 10% of pupils per school, schools are free to determine the size of their gifted and talented population, but should be able to justify this in terms of improved standards for all learners identified. Every school should keep a register of its gifted and talented learners. Since relative ability changes over time, learners should move on and off the register when appropriate. As ability is evenly distributed throughout the population, a school's gifted and talented population should be broadly representative of the whole school population in terms of gender, ethnic and socio-economic background.

This guidance booklet:

- starts from the principle that there is no single perfect instrument for identification - schools are advised to use a 'best fit' model that draws on a range of evidence including qualitative and quantitative elements;
- argues that identification and provision are inseparable, because identification includes spotting potential through participation in learning opportunities; and
- envisages a continuous cyclical process of identification and review rather than a one-off process.

The National Register - first announced in the 2005 White Paper 'Higher Standards: Better Schools for All' - is an amalgamation of all schools' gifted and talented registers (submitted through School Census returns). It also includes the database of NAGTY members.

Over time, it will develop to:

- include a wide range of quantitative data about pupil attainment and ability;
- enable analysis of the national gifted and talented population - or any subset of it - by reference to all data held in the National Pupil Database;
- enable the identification of learners who are not currently part of their school's gifted and talented population though they might be performing at broadly the same level.

The main purpose of the National Register is to support schools in the identification of their gifted and talented learners and to help them track the attainment/performance of their gifted and talented population compared with others.

The National Quality Standards in gifted and talented education

The National Quality Standards in gifted and talented education are designed to support schools through a cyclical process of self-review and planning to tackle the various aspects of gifted and talented provision, including identification. Below are the standards that apply specifically to identification. The National Quality Standards is a self-evaluation tool, which links well with the SEF and whole school improvement. It is based on the 5 elements of the Personalisation Framework with 14 themes and 3 levels of competence to assist schools in self-diagnosis.
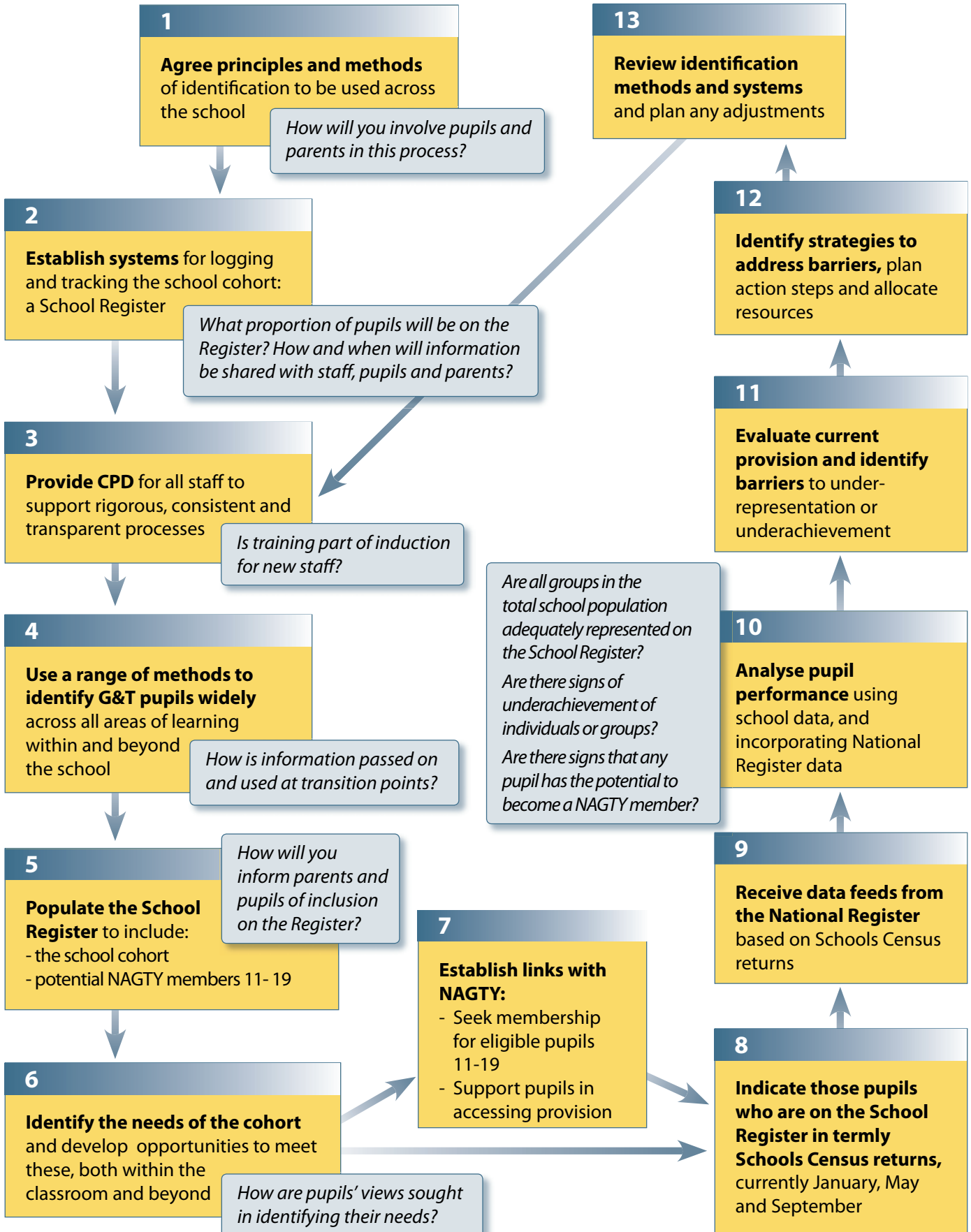
- Entry level is pitched to be within the reach of almost all schools - satisfactory
- Developing level is designed for schools working towards exemplary provision - good
- Exemplary level is demonstrating excellent practice - outstanding

Entry	
	● The school/college has learning conditions and systems to identify gifted and talented pupils in all year groups and an agreed definition and shared understanding of the meaning of 'gifted and talented' within its own, local and national contexts
	● An accurate record of the identified gifted and talented population is kept and updated
	● The identified gifted and talented population broadly reflects the school/college's social and economic composition, gender and ethnicity
Developing	● Individual pupils are screened annually against clear criteria at school/college and subject/topic level
	● The record is used to identify under-achievement and exceptional achievement (both within and outside the population) and to track/review pupil progress
	● Identification systems address issues of multiple exceptionality (pupils with specific gifts/talents and special educational needs)
Exemplary	● Multiple criteria and sources of evidence are used to identify gifts and talents, including through the use of a broad range of quantitative and qualitative data
	● The record is supported by a comprehensive monitoring, progress planning and reporting system which all staff regularly share and contribute to
	● Identification processes are regularly reviewed and refreshed in the light of pupil performance and value-added data. The gifted and talented population is fully representative of the school/college's population

SCHOOL-WIDE IDENTIFICATION PROCESSES

Identification should be an on-going process, feeding directly into the planning of personalised provision for pupils. It will also, however, need to feed into the annual review of policy and practice and be an integral part of the wider school improvement cycle. The flow chart below shows how this might happen, and how school processes will be linked to the National Register at key points, and in turn be informed by the data which the Register will generate.

1
Agree principles and methods of identification to be used across the school

How will you involve pupils and parents in this process?

2
Establish systems for logging and tracking the school cohort: a School Register

What proportion of pupils will be on the Register? How and when will information be shared with staff, pupils and parents?

3
Provide CPD for all staff to support rigorous, consistent and transparent processes

Is training part of induction for new staff?

4
Use a range of methods to identify G&T pupils widely across all areas of learning within and beyond the school

How is information passed on and used at transition points?

5
Populate the School Register to include:
- the school cohort
- potential NAGTY members 11- 19

How will you inform parents and pupils of inclusion on the Register?

6
Identify the needs of the cohort and develop opportunities to meet these, both within the classroom and beyond

How are pupils' views sought in identifying their needs?

7
Establish links with NAGTY:
- Seek membership for eligible pupils 11-19
- Support pupils in accessing provision

8
Indicate those pupils who are on the School Register in termly Schools Census returns, currently January, May and September

9
Receive data feeds from the National Register based on Schools Census returns

10
Analyse pupil performance using school data, and incorporating National Register data

Are all groups in the total school population adequately represented on the School Register?

Are there signs of underachievement of individuals or groups?

Are there signs that any pupil has the potential to become a NAGTY member?

11
Evaluate current provision and identify barriers to under-representation or underachievement

12
Identify strategies to address barriers, plan action steps and allocate resources

13
Review identification methods and systems and plan any adjustments

General Characteristics of Gifted and Talented Pupils

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 a pupil'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 their own interest areas
- have an ability to work things out in their head very quickly
- have a good memory that they can access easily
- be artistic
- be musical
- excel at sport
- have strong views and opinions
- have a lively and original imagination / sense of humour
- be very sensitive and aware
- focus on their 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 be well-behaved or well liked by others

Underachievement

Gifted and talented underachievers may tend to:
- Have low self-esteem
- Be confused about their development and about why they are behaving as they are
- Manipulate their environment to make themselves feel better
- Tend towards a superior attitude to those around them
- Find inadequacy in others, in things, in systems, to excuse their own behaviours

Sometimes pupils with abilities in one or more areas of learning may also suffer from a disability or difficulty in others. This can present a considerable barrier to the achievement of potential, as well as leading to frustration and disaffection.

Developing strategies and approaches to countering underachievement should be an integral part of the school policy for gifted and talented provision. The key aspects of underachievement that need to be taken into account and considered are:

- What are the **indicators** of underachievement?
- What are the **causes** of underachievement?
- What are some ways of **countering** underachievement?
- Are there potential causes due to **dual or multiple exceptionalities?**

Identification methods

Schools 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. A range of popular methods for identification are listed below.

1 **Teacher nomination**
2 **Checklists**
3 **Testing- achievement, potential and curriculum ability**
4 **Assessment of children's work**
5 **Peer nomination**
6 **Parental information**
7 **Discussions with children**
8 **Using community resources**

Methods can differ between age phases and between different subjects. The QCA provides detailed guidance to support assessment in different subject areas and provide a useful starting point for schools to develop their approach to identifying and supporting gifted and talented pupils, both within and across the curriculum.

NAGTY Student Academy Eligibility Criteria

The National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth provides support and additional learning opportunities for its student members. Students (aged from 11-19 years) can become members if they meet the eligibility criteria. A short overview of the criteria is provided here but full details are available on the NAGTY website.

Qualifying Test Evidence
- CATs, MidYIS, Yellis, NFER verbal reasoning
- Other cognitive ability tests (eg WISC)
- SATs at KS2 and 3, GCSEs, GNVQs
- World Class Tests
- University entrance tests (eg TGA)

Non-test Evidence
These may range from a teacher reference, evidence of 'academic-related' activities out of school or valid independent assessments (e.g. a psychologist).

Talent Criteria
These may range from a teacher reference and evidence of high performance to attendance at various centres of excellence in the talent area. Also qualifying are holders of dance and music scholarships, national grants or the Dance and Drama Awards (DADA).
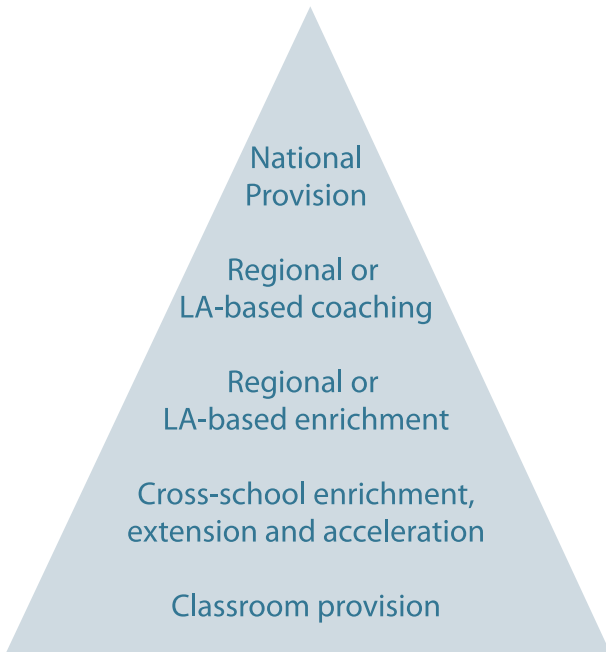
Indicators of Gifts and Talents by Phase

Some children display signs of high ability at an early age. However, since a pupil's level of ability is not fixed and may develop significantly over time, the stage at which high potential is demonstrated will vary from one child to another. Teacher observation and informal assessment play an essential part in recognising high potential, particularly in the case of very young children. Whilst characteristics of high ability may be displayed at any age, some features may become particularly prominent during one phase of development and of schooling. Similarly, it is important that schools should meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils in ways which are most appropriate for the stage of personal, social and emotional development which has been reached. The table below provides some examples of particular characteristics, needs of learners and prompts which may be most prominent, though not found exclusively, during one phase of schooling or another. These are indicative and not definitive.

Early Years	Primary	Secondary
Is it precocity or giftedness?	Needs fewer steps in process	Questions rules/authority
Uneven development	Enjoys increased pace	Non-conformity
Gets cross if task too easy/hard	Needs less instruction and practice	High ability/low motivation
Needs to own extended tasks	Thrives on independent study	Keen sense of justice
May display 'unique creativity'	Copes with abstract tasks	Divergent thinking/creativity
Often easily bored & disruptive	Likes open-ended situations	Excellent sense of humour
Very good verbal/reasoning	Needs to learn to fail	Growing self-determination
Needs enrichment more than acceleration	Responds to wide variety of creative opportunities	May develop lifelong passion for field or hobby
Can show reflection above age	Needs to be encouraged to take risks	Intellectual curiosity stands out
Identification for understanding and provision not labelling	Whatever the intellectual level must remember actual age	Needs to work with pupils of similar ability in/out of school
Emotional literacy can lag behind academic work	Needs to develop self-esteem in supportive environment	Exceptional powers of concentration, stamina

From Identification to Provision

National
Provision

Regional or
LA-based coaching

Regional or
LA-based enrichment

Cross-school enrichment,
extension and acceleration

Classroom provision

The above diagram sets out the layers of provision for gifted and talented children. Stretch and challenge for gifted and talented pupils in every classroom is absolutely critical. Providers at this level and every level should consider what is available at the next layer of provision that might benefit the pupil. Once a pupil has been identified as gifted there should be support available through the levels of the pyramid. National provision is available for the top 5% cohort (provided through the NAGTY Student Academy).

Personalisation: From Identification to Practice

Personalised learning is about tailoring education to individual need, interest and aptitude so as to ensure that every pupil achieves and reaches the highest standards possible, notwithstanding their background or circumstances. For gifted and talented learners this includes:
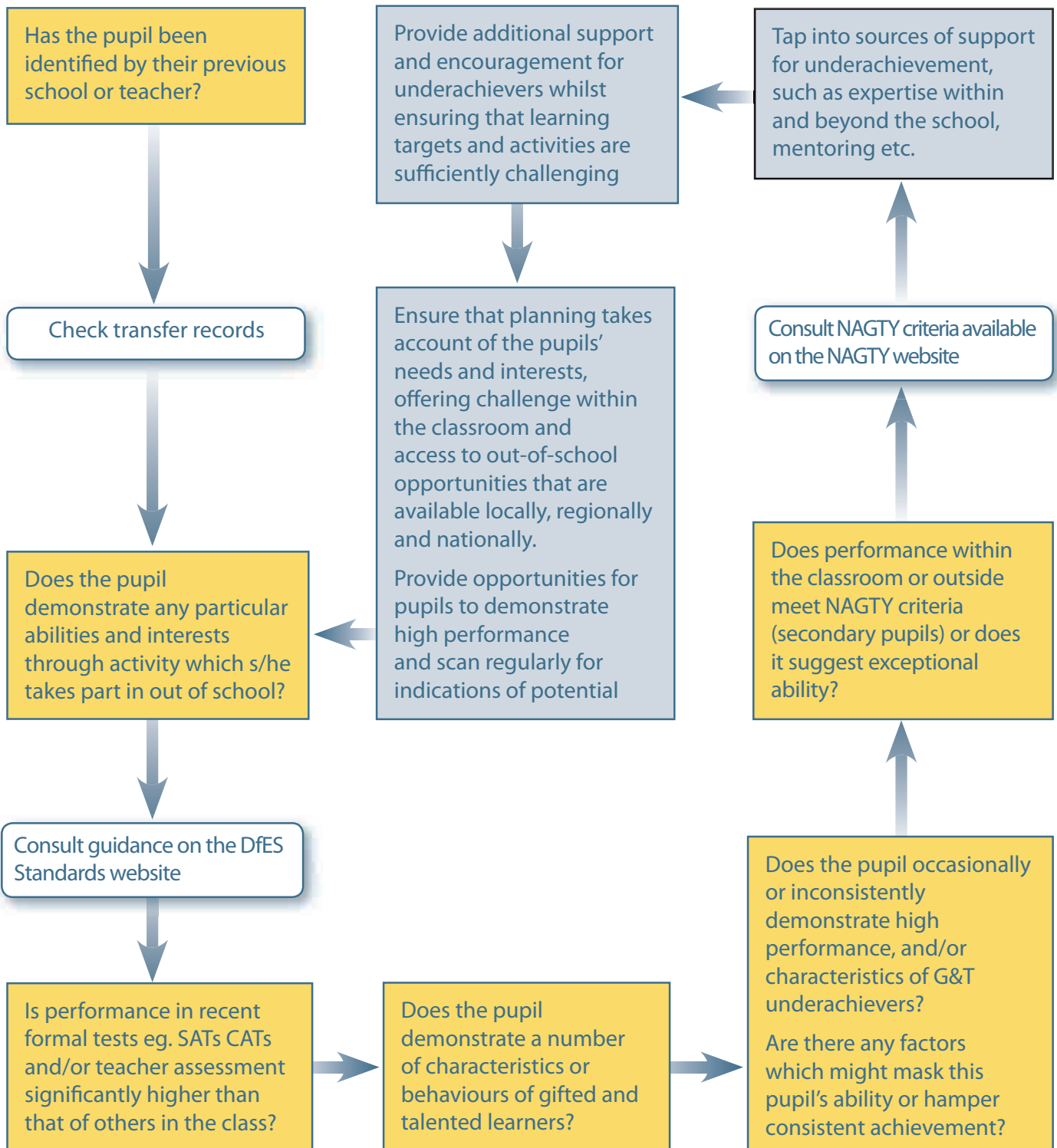
● effective assessment for learning, so that planning takes account of prior learning, stretching curricular targets are set with pupils, and differentiated learning objectives and outcomes are shared;

● 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;

● above all, a rich provision for all provides further opportunities for identification.

PROMPTS FOR IDENTIFICATION WITHIN THE CLASSROOM

This diagram is intended to support class/subject teachers in identifying gifted and talented pupils. The processes in it will feed into and should be informed by those in the School-wide Identification Cycle. Whilst it demonstrates one possible routeway, teachers should continuously be on the look-out for indications of high ability and previously undiscovered potential in the classes they teach. They will need to plan a range of opportunities for pupils to demonstrate ability, and regularly monitor pupil behaviours, interests and achievement for indications of ability or potential ability.

START

Has the pupil been identified by their previous school or teacher?

Check transfer records

Does the pupil demonstrate any particular abilities and interests through activity which s/he takes part in out of school?

Consult guidance on the DfES Standards website

Is performance in recent formal tests eg. SATs CATs and/or teacher assessment significantly higher than that of others in the class?

Does the pupil demonstrate a number of characteristics or behaviours of gifted and talented learners?

Does the pupil occasionally or inconsistently demonstrate high performance, and/or characteristics of G&T underachievers?

Are there any factors which might mask this pupil's ability or hamper consistent achievement?

Provide additional support and encouragement for underachievers whilst ensuring that learning targets and activities are sufficiently challenging

Ensure that planning takes account of the pupils' needs and interests, offering challenge within the classroom and access to out-of-school opportunities that are available locally, regionally and nationally.

Provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate high performance and scan regularly for indications of potential

Tap into sources of support for underachievement, such as expertise within and beyond the school, mentoring etc.

Consult NAGTY criteria available on the NAGTY website

Does performance within the classroom or outside meet NAGTY criteria (secondary pupils) or does it suggest exceptional ability?

Some key questions to help with identification   Some pointers towards provision

Web links to get started

The DfES Standards Site - Government policy and information on identification.

http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ giftedandtalented/

G&T WISE website on teachernet - support and tools for educators of gifted and talented children.

http://www2.teachernet.gov.uk/gat/

The National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth - information about the Student Academy, access to research relating to gifted and talented education, CPD resources.

http://www.nagty.ac.uk/

Creative Generation - a starting point for information on talent.

http://www.creativegeneration.org.uk.

QCA - guidance on subject identification

http://www.nc.uk.net/gt/

75% recycled
This leaflet is printed on 75% recycled paper

recycle
When you have finished with this leaflet please recycle it

department for
education and skills

Creating Opportunity
Releasing Potential
Achieving Excellence