

Supplementary guidance:

more able and talented
learners

Autumn 2017

The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- ▲ nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities
- ▲ primary schools
- ▲ secondary schools
- ▲ all-age schools
- ▲ special schools
- ▲ pupil referral units
- ▲ independent schools
- ▲ further education
- ▲ independent specialist colleges
- ▲ adult community learning
- ▲ local authority education services for children and young people
- ▲ teacher education and training
- ▲ Welsh for adults
- ▲ work-based learning
- ▲ learning in the justice sector

Estyn also:

- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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What is the purpose?

To provide guidance to inspectors for evaluating standards and provision for more able and talented learners aged 3 to 19 years of age in Wales.

For whom is it intended?

All inspectors of maintained and independent schools and FE colleges.

From when should the guidance be used?

From September 2017.

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Supplementary guidance

The key Estyn documents that guide inspection activity are the inspection guidance handbooks for each sector. However, we also produce supplementary guidance to help inspectors to consider specific aspects of education and training further.

The supplementary guidance documents set out some key principles, considerations and resources for inspectors. They relate to all sectors that Estyn inspects, unless they state that they are for a specific sector. They expand on certain aspects of education/training (e.g. the inspection of literacy) or on ways of conducting inspections (e.g. the use of learning walks) or specific inspection arrangements (e.g. guidance on inspecting church schools).

The supplementary guidance documents do not aim to be comprehensive. Inspectors are not required to work through them exhaustively when covering any specific aspect on an inspection. However, inspectors may find them useful when responding to specific emerging questions that arise during inspections or when they wish to reflect or investigate further.

The supplementary guidance documents may help providers gain an understanding of Estyn's inspection arrangements. They may also be helpful to providers in evaluating specific aspects of their own provision.

Our inspection work is based on the following principles:

- Inspectors will approach inspection with a positive mindset to ensure it is the best possible professional learning experience for the staff in each provider
- Inspectors will take a learner-focused approach to inspection
- Inspectors will always focus strongly on the quality of teaching and learning
- Inspectors will seek out well-considered innovative practice
- Inspectors will tailor the inspection activities according to the circumstances in each provider as far as possible
- Inspectors will be agile and responsive to emerging findings and will use the increased range of inspection tools and approaches available
- Inspectors will consider everything in the inspection framework, but will only report on the key strengths and weaknesses within each provider

1 Introduction

The Welsh Government aims for all learners to have the best start in life with opportunities and encouragement to achieve their full learning potential. In May, 2008, the Welsh Assembly Government published a set of Quality Standards¹ to support schools and local authorities to meet the needs of more able and talented learners. These aims and standards supported the Welsh Government's commitment to the UNCRC Rights of the Child in 2004. More recently, the Wellbeing and Future Generations (Wales) Act² sets out seven clear goals for wellbeing. One of these goals - 'a more equal Wales' - aims for 'a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances'. Furthermore, Welsh Government's acceptance of the four purposes outlined in 'Successful Futures'³ confirms its commitment to developing all learners as 'ambitious, capable learners', 'enterprising, creative contributors', 'ethical, informed citizens' and 'healthy, confident individuals'.

In 2016, the Welsh Government published guidance on [More able and talented learners for the further education sector in Wales](#).

There is no universally-agreed definition of learners who generally would be recognised as more able. For example, the term 'more able and talented' encompasses approximately 20% of the total school population, and is used to describe learners who require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for the general cohort of learners.

The term 'more able and talented' includes learners who possess more developed skills and understanding across subjects within the curriculum as well as those who show talent in one or more specific areas, which could include practical, creative and social fields of human activity.

The identification of more able and talented learners is linked to their context, regardless of how these learners compare to more able and talented learners in other providers. In every provider therefore, you should expect to find a group of learners identified as more able and talented, as well as suitable provision for their development through the breadth and depth of their learning experiences and activities. Providing an enriched curriculum can improve the quality of learning and raise standards for learners of all abilities and talents, giving them opportunities and encouragement to achieve their full learning potential.

This supplementary guidance links to Estyn's common inspection framework and the guidance handbooks for each sector.

¹ Meeting the Challenge Guidance Circular No: 006/2008 Welsh Assembly Government.

² Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: Welsh Assembly Government

³ Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales: Professor Graham Donaldson CB (2015)

2 Evaluating standards and provision for more able and talented learners

This guidance gives questions for inspectors to consider when evaluating the standards and provision for more able and talented learners. The questions are related to the five inspection areas of the framework⁴.

Inspection area 1: Standards

- Do more able and talented learners achieve what is expected of them from baseline and prior achievement and attainment information?
- Are the standards reached by more able and talented learners appropriate to their abilities? Do more able and talented learners reach certain progression steps more quickly than their peers?
- What are the trends in performance at the higher grades in external examinations and higher-than-expected outcomes in any nationally collected or externally verified assessments?

Inspection area 2: Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

- How do more able and talented learners feel about their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing?
- What are the attitudes to learning of the more able and talented, are they interested in their work, and how well do they engage in tasks?

Inspection area 3: Teaching and learning experiences

- How well do teachers take account of learners' differing abilities and learning needs?
- Do teachers provide opportunities to develop higher-order learning skills, problem-solving and thinking skills in their planning and teaching?
- Do teachers avoid approaches that rely on these learners being required to do more of the same work or low-level extension work such as puzzles and quizzes?
- Are teachers aware that issues such as disaffection may mask high ability and that a learner's particular strengths can lie in unconventional areas of development?
- How does the school/college organise its provision for more able and talented learners? Is the curriculum and other provision flexible and challenging enough to meet the needs of more able and talented learners? Does the school/college

⁴ Inspection Framework 2017

give enough attention to all groups of more able and talented learners, including those who are disadvantaged, have disabilities or come from minority ethnic groups? Is the identification of more able and talented learners a flexible and continuous process involving a range of strategies? Does the provision include enrichment and extension in class, as well as opportunities for out-of-school/college learning?

Inspection area 4: Care, support and guidance

- How well does the school/college identify, track and monitor the progress and achievement of more able and talented learners?
- How well does the school/college collect and analyse a range of information and data, including performance information in sport, music and the creative arts?
- Is there an ethos which sets high expectations for all learners and encourages emotional, social, physical and intellectual development?
- Does the school/college identify individual learning and wellbeing needs when the learners join them and ensure these needs are met?
- In schools, do staff work closely with the parents/carers of more able and talented learners and provide appropriate guidance that enables them to support their children effectively?
- How much influence do more able and talented learners have on what and how they learn, and, more widely in pupil/student groups in the school/college?
- Does the school/college take steps to ensure that the ethos in the school/college promotes and values the celebration of individual abilities or talents?

Inspection area 5: Leadership and management

- Do the school's/college's policies support consistent and effective practice for more able and talented learners?
- Are governors involved in securing appropriate provision for more able and talented learners? Is there systematic monitoring and rigorous evaluation to ensure that all learners achieve as well as they can? Does the school have links with other schools, colleges, the local authority, outside agencies and other organisations that help to further extend and enrich learners' experiences? How effectively do schools and other providers work together to ensure continued challenge for more able and talented learners when they transfer from one to another?
- Is there suitable professional learning to help practitioners develop their own expertise in identifying and meeting the needs of more able and talented learners?
- Do learners have access to suitable resources, including information and communications technology and research and information sources, which interest, challenge and extend their learning and enable them to achieve as well as they can?