

## Gifted and talented

**Developing gifted and talented education should be a school-wide responsibility. So how can leading teachers ensure the task is widely embraced?**

Lyn Bull, a National Strategies regional adviser, was in the hotseat for t2l's recent debate on gifted and talented and the role of the leading teacher in particular.

Key points were:

- leading gifted and talented should not be seen as one person's responsibility
- schools that achieve most success with gifted and talented spread the responsibility across key people and departments
- significant role for the lead teacher is supporting other staff

The key challenge, many agreed, is to ensure that every teacher is aware and equipped to support gifted and talented children in their class. It means the leading teacher has to think strategically, Lyn Bull emphasised.

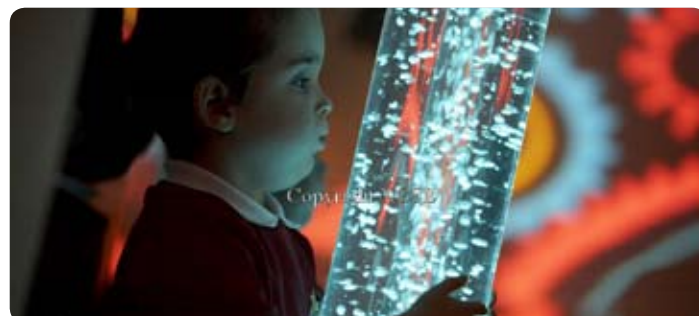
*"The ideal leading teacher is one who is in a position to drive the strategic planning at all levels and work with key colleagues to increase challenge in teaching and learning in all classrooms for gifted and talented pupils and thereby for all pupils."*

Veronica Kitson, leading teacher in a secondary school in Norfolk, described how a team approach was becoming embedded in her school.

"Each department is to include gifted and talented as an agenda item for meetings and also has a gifted and talented rep to who any information concerning a particular subject area is passed.

*"It is a big role for one teacher to think they can tackle solo,"* she agreed. "It is something that needs the co-operation of the whole school."

Sandra Sutherland, a Special needs co-ordinator (Senco) and gifted and talented leading teacher in a junior school in Warwickshire, highlighted how her school had incorporated gifted and talented into school-wide strategy.



"The bulk of my time has been spent managing our provision for children with special educational needs (SEN) until now but I am committed to the idea that gifted and talented children also need to be catered for. *This view has been accommodated in our teaching and learning responsibility structure, which means that I am overall pupil progress leader, responsible for support and intervention for the whole spectrum of ability.*"

Rebecca Pantony, leading teacher in a primary school in West Sussex, saw supporting and advising the team as a key task:

*"I agree that everyone within the school who is responsible for managing a subject should be including provision for more able and gifted and talented children. I am trying to create my role as someone from whom they can get up-to-date ideas."*

Like several contributors Catherine Champion, inclusion leader at a primary in Essex, is responsible for special needs as well as gifted and talented. The way the dual role is organised enables her to gather intelligence on learning needs across the school.

"I have a .5 teaching commitment which is shared between groups of children with SEN and groups of gifted and talented. *This has the advantage of not immediately identifying which end of the spectrum will be working with me and gives me a really good overview of the provision for all vulnerable groups.*"

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