

# **Focus: Gifted and talented programmes in low decile schools**

## **Sabbatical Report**

**Julia Davidson  
Principal, Aotea College**

### **Purpose:**

When I began this investigation I was interested to find out what low decile schools had in place to support their gifted and talented students. I chose decile 1-5 schools and I decided to look at secondary schools or Yr 7 – 13 schools only. My main goal was to look at what others were doing alongside what we were doing at Aotea with a view to coming up with a proposal as to how we could further develop our programmes.

I also visited one high decile school, specifically because they had EHSAS funding for G&T and I thought it would be useful to see what they were doing in their project.

### **Method:**

In term one 2006, I sent a survey to every decile 1-5 secondary and Yr 7 – 13 school in New Zealand. Based on the information I received from the schools and as a result of a meeting with Sally Smart from Multiserve (who hold the MOE contract for G&T education), I identified 20 schools that I wanted to visit in the North Island. I then contacted the schools and 14 were able and willing to have me come and look at what they were doing.

I also attended the 'Rising Tides' conference in Wellington from 3-5 August which looked at the issues surrounding Gifted and Talented education.

I have sent a copy of the text to each person I spoke to and have asked for any corrections or clarifications from them, so at the time I am publishing this, the information is as accurate as I can make it.

I am very grateful to everyone who was prepared to have me in their school and spend so much of their valuable time with me. It was a wonderful opportunity and I learned a great deal from my visits – it may even be useful to someone else! It will certainly be helpful at Aotea as we move on to the next stage of development of our Gifted and Talented programme.

### **Alfriston College**

*Susan Impey, Deputy Principal; Michal Denny, Acting HOD Science, ICT Project manager, Yr 10 ILC mentor; Mary Mason, Yr 9 ILC mentor*

Alfriston College is a decile 4 school of 750 students, located in Manurewa East, Auckland. The school is three years old.

When the school was established, there was a decision made to base the pedagogy of the school on a programme developed at Cramlington College in the UK – this focuses on an integrated approach to teaching and teaching a

learning to learn programme. This programme is taught to all Yr 9 students on a Tuesday morning for the first 90 minutes of school.

In Yr 9, students are selected for the G&T programme using asTTle data and information from contributing schools. In Yrs 9 – 11 one class at each level is an Independent Learning Class (ILC). This class is limited to about 20 students and is taught as a group in core subjects. The timetable at Alfriston is structured on 300 minutes a day – either 3 x 100 minute lessons or some 50 minute lessons. In all years, the ILC students have one lesson less a week from each of the core subjects and the 200 minutes gained are for ILC - as a class in the Library, without a teacher, working on special projects.

In Yr 9 the students have worked on a major study for two terms based on the question 'Is there a waste issue at Alfriston College?'. The term 3 project is on a topic of the students' own choosing using ICT – they are designing web pages, taking part in video competitions, keeping a video diary, and doing the web challenge.) There is a desire to link the projects to the Yr 9 curriculum but to extend students and offer them a breadth of opportunities that would not normally be available.

Their mentor takes them for their Learning to Learn programme so that links in well and she is able to spend time on the ILC programme each week and check on student progress. Students work in groups on their project and they were set up with tasks to do each week. These had to be emailed to the mentor to monitor progress. Process is the focus initially – not product. As the year progresses they are left to work on their own more and organise their own programme.

A 'Celebration of learning' evening was held at the start of Term 3 to show parents what the students had achieved in their first two terms.

In Yr 10, the students have just completed individual work on a range of topics linked to biotechnology. Students were required to present their findings to their peers and they evaluated each other. They had had six weeks to complete this.

When I saw them they were moving on to some work on Philosophy and were starting with some ethical dilemmas being posed for them to discuss.

In Yr 11 students do the school magazine as part of their ILC programme.

G&T students at Alfriston take part in a camp run in conjunction with other Manurewa colleges once a year.

Each term the college collapses its timetable for three days for all students and staff to take part in an 'episode'. These are thematic in nature and students choose what they will do for the three days from a range of options presented to them. September's topic is 'The global world we live in' and students will choose from 16 options ranging from sculpture to creative writing to working at the Liggins Institute. Staff offer something they are particularly interested in and there are always choices available for the more able students. All options are open to all levels. To manage this in Yr 11, all courses offer only 15 – 18 credits so that they are not disadvantaged by 'losing' 12 days a year.

On Tuesday morning when the Yr 9s are doing their Learning to Learn programme, all other students take part in a modules programme for 90

minutes. Some are extension, some are self interest (running, swimming), some are remedial (NCEA numeracy), some are special purpose (production).

In 2007 the college will open its Independent Learning Centre which will be the new space for the ILC classes. It will have a full time manager and one staff member in it at all times. All Yr 12 students will also use it for 20% of their class time when staff will be expected to set work for the students, using the College's intranet as a main source. It is expected that students who have been in the ILC programme will have complete freedom as to how they spend that time; other students will have a more structured programme.

Key issues:

- Having staff who are able and willing to support three classes of independent learners in the Library
- Having the appropriate staff acting as mentors
- Having a well articulated vision for G&T students and making that plain to students, staff and parents
- Having access to community groups to actively support projects
- Setting clear expectations for students
- Having access to a place for students to work as a group with support

### **Auckland Girls' Grammar School**

*Robyn Charlton, Co-ordinator of students with high potential; Fiona Larsen, HOD Special needs*

Auckland Girls' Grammar School has 1370 students and is decile 5.

The current G&T programme has run for about 4 years.

The two staff are involved with different aspects of the programme.

Fiona runs withdrawal groups, like Future problem Solving and Creative thinking Skills; Robyn acts more as an academic dean for the most able students in the school. They operate independently of one another and often have different girls involved in each programme but one aim is to work coordinated way, as time allows.

AGGS runs broad banded classes in English and Maths in Yrs 9-11, but not in Social Studies and Science.

Robyn chooses her students in Yr 9, after looking at the entrance tests and talking to the staff of the upper band classes. Once the girls are chosen they remain part of that group throughout their time at school unless they choose to leave the programme. They are never taught as an actual group, but meeting together allows them to form friendships and exchange ideas about subject content. Parents are sent home information and have to give permission for their daughter to be in the programme. The numbers vary; this year there are 12 in Yr 9; 36 in Yr 10; 25 in Yr 11; 22 in Yr 12. The smaller number works better and in future years it is likely the group will be smaller in size. Wherever possible she tries for an ethnic balance.

The students meet once every four weeks with Robyn, as a year level group, in the long form time. These meetings have a variety of purposes - they address concerns, raise awareness, provide challenges or games,

hear speakers, meet each other etc. Questionnaires are used extensively to find out information - both on enrolment and during their time at school. They meet in Robyn's form room and this has become a bolt hole for them if they need anything.

Parents and girls use Robyn as their first port of call and she spends most of her time dealing with their issues/concerns. If there are staff problems she deals with them directly. Her aim is for every student to have the best experience possible in the classroom.

Maths and English offer a few credits for students a year early and individual students can be accelerated if Robyn, the HOD and the relevant DP approve.

Top students in Yr 11 take 6 subjects and PE.

The staff is generally supportive of the programme and everyone is aware of the need to publicly acknowledge academic success in this time of competition for students.

Key issues:

- The AGGS programme is highly individualised
- Contact with home is crucial to its success but because of the widely spread student body, meetings are not possible - so email is the norm
- Ongoing communication with staff about the programme is essential - one session at the start of the year isn't enough!
- In the future more liaison with the HOD Special Needs is seen as being beneficial
- Robyn reports to the Principal formally once a year in writing, and informally as the need arises.

## **Bishop Viard College**

*Diana Kelly (TIC G&T) & Stephanie Dodd (HOD Learning Support)*

Bishop Viard College is a decile 2, Yr 7 – 13 Catholic integrated school in Porirua.

Bishop Viard College has run programmes for gifted and talented students for the last 15 years. These have been promoted from the Board level and have been a priority for the school in a financial sense, although the programme has changed over time.

The programme used to focus on students with a purely academic talent and promoted competitions and a range of academic disciplines. In recent years, as the understandings and definitions of giftedness have changed, so too have the school's programmes and identification processes. Teachers nominate students with specific areas of talent along with those who are seen to have skills in areas like leadership and cultural activities. Test results are just one area considered. Because of the very broad criteria used, a wide range of students are involved.

Bishop Viard has developed a home grown programme that is highly adaptive, needs based and flexible. Yr 7 – 10 students are involved in this, usually in groupings of 7/8 and 9/10. A minimum of 8 and a maximum of 18 students work together at any one time. Students are withdrawn from normal

classes for one or two periods a week, usually for one or two terms (depending on the focus). Once students are identified, parents are contacted and have to send back a letter giving approval for their child to take part and having them out of school on some of the activities that make up the programme. It is seen as a honour to be invited to take part.

On the whole staff are supportive of the programme and some other staff are involved in specific aspects of it – e.g. helping with a film making unit that is about to be undertaken.

The range of the programme (which is called Enrichment) includes dance, drama, debating and other oral skills, thinking skills, leadership and cultural leadership.

There has been a high degree of alignment between students identified for the programme in Yrs 7-10 and those who perform well in the senior school.

Key issues:

- This is mainly but not exclusively a withdrawal programme. Students with specific talents in particular areas are generally expected to be catered for by their subject teachers – the Learning Support Department will often support this with additional resources (like teacher aide time)
- The teacher is absolutely critical to the success of this programme
- Parents and students are supportive of the programme
- Occasionally a teacher will try and make a student catch up on work – but that issue is addressed as it arises. Generally staff are supportive of it.
- Because of the very broad interpretation of G&T, a large number of students (up to 120 pa) can take part in the programme
- The programme is well resourced from the school – 8 hrs a week of a teacher plus running costs. It is seen to be good value for this expenditure and the increase in hours (from 5 – 8 in recent years) would indicate that the work is valued.
- Some departments are still involved with competitions (like Australian Maths)
- The enrichment students take part in the BP Technology Challenge each year
- The enrichment programme uses the wider community – through people, places, visitors to speak to students and trips. This helps to foster school / home partnerships.
- The programme has the full support of the Board, Principal and HOD Learning Support

## **Edgewater College**

*John Grigg, TIC G&T students*

Edgewater is a decile 4 school of just under 1000 students, located in Pakuranga.

Edgewater tests all incoming Yr 8 students using a range of tests, including SPM (Standard Progressive matrix) which is a non verbal test, so ESOL

students can be better catered for. Based on this information and information from the contributing schools, they broad band their classes – 2 top, and one bottom usually. Students in the top class in Yr 10 have access to some NCEA credits through Maths and Geography instead of Social Studies.

Departments coordinate subject related competitions and activities for students with talents in particular subjects.

2006 is the first year Edgewater has had a special G&T programme running. 14 Yr 9 students were chosen and they meet twice a week instead of going to an option class (and they'll get marks and reports as per any other option). They are taught as a group during this time, with the focus being on broadening their thinking skills through puzzles initially each lesson, and then a structured programme using Anne Sturges' 'Future Thinking' book. The aim is to give them access to experiences they wouldn't usually have in the ordinary curriculum and to develop transferable skills that they can use in all areas of their schooling. John is a Science teacher so he is concerned that he not focus on his area of speciality to the exclusion of some others.

They have worked on Future Problem Solving activities (non-competitive this year) but have found some of the group work difficult. They may look at doing the individual tasks next year instead.

At present the students are working on individual projects in their own time and in some school time, based on Anne Sturges' Research assignment in the book. One of the key aspects of this is self assessment.

It is likely that the programme will remain focussed on Yr 9 next year with it moving to Yr 9 & 10 in 2008. The focus will probably remain on the junior school.

The TIC has 2 hrs a week with the students and 1 hr a week to coordinate the programme. This year the budget has been spent on resources and professional development.

Key issues:

- The staff were told what was going to happen this year and to date there has been no resistance to having the most able students removed from an option line
- Parents are told the students have been chosen for the programme and are asked to give their permission for the student to take part
- With only 14 students chosen there is concern (from John) about whether the size is right and the right students were chosen
- It is hope that this year's students will form the nucleus of a G&T group who can be lead students in later years and role models for those who follow. This will mean time to continue working with these students in a meaningful way

## **Hamilton Boys' High School**

*Sue Hassall, Headmaster*

Hamilton Boys' High School is a decile 8 school of 1700 students.

It has attracted TDI (Talent Development Initiative) funding for the last three years and is now attracting EHSAS (Extending High Standards across

Schools) funding for linking its G&T programme with other schools. It has been running a structured G&T programme since 1997.

Under the TDI programme the top Yr 9 class was used to link (using ICT) with able boys in Yr 8 country schools. A holiday programme was run once a year using the school's boarding hostel. The funds were used to buy gear and train staff and the programme will continue to run without the TDI funds but the holiday programme will now need to be user pays.

The EHSAS funds are being used to train staff at Rotorua Boys' and Hastings Boys' in the Hamilton model for G&T students. The model is based on Betts' Autonomous Learner principles. Some of the funds will also be used to help develop a model that works well for Maori and Pasifika students.

HBHS runs an Advanced learning programme (ALP) for its 100 most able junior students in each of Yr 9 & 10. Students are tested in Yr 8 using the Canterbury University tests and data from teachers and parents. Four classes are selected – 9.1.1 is the absolute top class; 9.1.2 has students with mainly English strengths; 9.1.3 has the top Maths students and 9.1.4 are the next 25 top students. Placements are confirmed after the first 6 weeks of school when the students sit their first common tests. Teaching social skills is a key part of the programme at this level. These students have a differentiated curriculum. Each class offers different pathways but the expectation is that the most able students will succeed in both NCEA and Cambridge exams higher up in the school.

In Yr 10, students take Level 1 English, Maths, Science and History; in Yr 11 they take Level 2 classics and in Yr 12 they take Level 3 Classics. For most students these are their 6<sup>th</sup> subject although the expectation is that they will take 5 subjects and do very well in them rather than taking 6 and getting only average results.

Staff have to train when they teach an ALP class. The master in charge of the G&T programme is responsible for the training and is given 8 hours a week to look after the programme. The main focus of the training is on teaching skills and differentiating the programme to suit the needs of the students.

In Yr 9 the four ALP classes have to undertake a service activity as a class. This is also required in Yr 10. (it usually involves some fund raising and then buying something for a community group with the proceeds.)

In Yr 9 boys are also expected to undertake a special study. They can do this individually or in small groups and it can be on anything. They have about 6 months to complete this. At the end of the year they present their project to their parents and staff at a special evening (which they organise and run) and the guests vote on who wins particular categories. (Book tokens are the usual prizes.)

A one day learning retreat is held early in the year for the Yr 9 boys. This year they had four workshops – Theatre sports, technology challenge, team building challenge and learning styles – which they rotate through.

Senior students are streamed and can start Cambridge courses in Yr 11.

In Yr 12/13 there is a Scholars group. It numbers about 32 this year. This group meets once a term with Waikato Diocesan's scholars group. Students take part in a number of workshops – this year these include working with a career consultant, getting involved with the secondary futures project, and hearing from the G&T specialists at Waikato University.

Key issues:

- Staff professional development is key to this model
- HBHS have developed a staff manual to help the teachers of the ALP classes
- Rigorous streaming is built in
- Co-ordination of the programme is essential
- Service is a key ingredient for all boys involved
- Clear pathways are made for the boys to help them progress through the school and parents are made aware of these from the beginning of yr 9
- There is an expectation that students will do both Cambridge and NCEA but boys can opt for only one if they so wish
- The Headmaster brought in this programme when she was Deputy head and she still takes a very active role in it, teaching 9.1.1 this year

### **Hamilton's Fraser High School**

*Jan Kearvell, HOD Learning Needs faculty; Karyn Porton, G&T teacher; Martin Elliott, Principal*

Hamilton's Fraser High School is a decile 5 school of 2000 students.

Two staff are involved with the G&T students (Jan and Karyn). Jan has time (4 hrs pw) and Karyn has no form class.

Students are identified from Yr 8 testing and two classes of students are chosen for the Enrichment programme. They use asTTle and PAT Maths at this stage. Parents can ask that their child be considered for the class by writing 'Enrichment' on the enrolment form. If they do this the student is looked at, whatever his/her testing results.

The programme is based on the Renzulli model in most respects but it also includes a community service aspect whereby students in the programme are expected to give back to the school through peer tutoring, SAFE (anti bullying team) etc.

Yr 9 is regarded as the year to look carefully at the students, check their ability and give them a breadth of experiences. At the end of Yr 9, 60 students are chosen for Yr 10. Both academic levels and attitude are considered for placement. Students are sent a contract they need to sign (and so do their parents) before they are accepted.

In Yr 10 the two classes are taught:

- Maths – they start Level 1 work and do some taster standards
- Social Studies – Level 1
- Science – Level 1
- English – 15 x Level 1 credits – wider reading, static image, creative writing, formal writing and research

This year the core teachers of Yr 10 are sharing information to try and integrate programmes more and use data better.

In Yr 11 they take:

- Maths – full Level 1
- Science – Chemistry, Physics and Biology credits at Level 1
- English – a mix of Level 1 externals and Level 2 internals



- Students are expected to take 6 subjects in most cases and they are aiming to get Merit or Excellence in everything they do

In Yr 12, a student gains access to the Enrichment programme by getting 6 standards at Excellence the level the previous year (so any student not on the programme previously can get onto it if they have the grades). They take a mix of Level 2/3 subjects and then in Yr 13 they have a focus on Scholarship and possibly some university courses.

In Yr 13, students need 4 Excellence grades from Level 2 to get onto the programme.

Students have access to a range of other experiences; competitions, university visits, university courses at the college (philosophy recently). They also run a Surf Camp each year – 1.5 days for Yr 10 and Yr 11 and the Yr 12 and 13 students come along to help. The focus is on making it cool to be a nerd! So along with thinking skills, team building, quiet time and practical challenges the students also learn to surf (or get better at it) and that is a cool thing in this area! It's cool to be clever is the aim.

Students with talents in individual subjects are dealt with by individual departments but it is expected that the G&T staff will be kept informed.

Individual student's successes are celebrated each term at assemblies.

Peer tutoring occurs at form time 4 days a week in the Learning Needs centre. (All students have to go to form time on Wednesday.) Up to 50 students are there every day. Tutors are trained and the focus is on literacy and numeracy.

All Yr 9 students have time in the Learning Needs centre (1 period each a year in small groups) to do some work on learning skills, memory tricks etc. Yr 10 enrichment students have time there working on time management and study skills.

#### Key issues:

- Fraser has a Learning Needs centre which is the base for the G&T students as well as those with other needs. Enrichment students have free access to this all day and for those with truly exceptional talents it is often a place to go when they have gone as far as they can in a subject and need time out to develop other interests
- Having the right staff driving the programme is critical to its success
- Staff professional development is essential and seen by the staff involved as the main area they need to focus on – so that everyone understands why they do what they do and how to access support
- The local G&T teachers now meet informally once a term to share ideas/issues etc. This is seen as being a real bonus as the teachers are often isolated in their school
- Having a shared vision is essential
- Parents and students are kept informed of upcoming competitions and other relevant information through email. All students and parents are asked to give these as part of the contract and it has become the main method of communication
- Despite the Enrichment programme in Yr 10 being taught to a whole class, there is considerable individualisation of the programmes for the students

## **Hastings Girls' High School**

*Geraldine Travers (Principal)*

Hastings Girls' is a decile 2 school of 750 girls.

Until about 1996, the school taught mixed ability classes, but went to a form of broad banding as much to meet community desires as for any other reason. The banding has now been refined so that of the 7 classes in yr 9 & 10, the top is taken off, a second class is taken, then four mixed classes are in the middle with a low achievers' class at the other end.

PATs are used to identify the top students. Any students gaining 98% or better on any PAT is taken out and for one hour a week has a special programme.

The HOD Special programmes is in charge of this process.

In Year 9 this is taken by HGHS's GAP student. The focus is on a project about Wellington. This is student centred and each student undertakes an area of study she is interested in. Research methodology is taught and the group visits Wellington as part of the work. Presentations to parents and staff conclude the work.

In Year 10 the students are taught a language, which is different from those offered in the school. The language chosen depends on staff availability – this year it is Mandarin, last year it was Latin.

Girls come out of a core subject to do this programme and there has been some staff resistance to losing the 'top' and having their contact hours reduced.

This year a top yr 13 Maths student is working with the most able junior Maths girls to teach them about using algebraic calculators. This was her own idea and she gives up her study spells to do it.

Girls are also offered opportunities through competitions and quizzes. In the past two or three students a year have attended the Auckland University residential programme for gifted students. (This didn't run in 2006 but they intend to go again next year. I spoke with two Yr 12 girls who has attended in Yr 10 and they extolled its virtues – as much for letting them mix with other students who could have been considered 'geeks', as for what they actually learned.)

Acceleration is managed on a case by case basis but it is the exception.

Key issues:

- There is a desire to offer as many opportunities for the high achievers as are offered for those at the other end of the range
- Staff resistance is still an issue that needs managing
- This programme requires little funding – the GAP student is the main cost and her expenses come from the international students' profits
- Overall staff go the extra mile for students and give them as many opportunities as they can to be extended

## **The Manurewa High School**

*Paul Lees, Facilitator G&T, Head of Academic Academy, Director TDI*

The Manurewa High School is a decile 2, co-ed school of 2400.

The programme they run is into its third year and last year they gained TDI funding to establish mentoring programmes for their G&T students and to develop differentiated learning for them.

The school offers Academic, Sporting and Music academies in Yrs 9 – 12 and in 2007 will start a Maori academy.

In Yr 9 students are broad banded based on asTTle. Students move between the classes and bands if they are seen to be wrongly placed.

At the end of Yr 9, students are given another asTTle and the deep thinking results are particularly looked at. Results from core subject testing is converted to a grade point average, Purdue scales are given to all staff to rate their students and students themselves are asked for information. All of this data is placed in a spread sheet and allocated weightings and the top 32 students are taken for the Academic Academy in Yr 10.

There is usually an imbalance of girls over boys in Yr 10 but this evens out a little by Yr 13.

Places are offered to parents and a contract is signed. A form of IEP is used to establish where students are going. This takes a lot of time and the TDI funding has made this more possible. Now the school is looking at strategies to deal with the students.

Departments are required to produce at least one differentiated unit each year and time has been given for the preparation of these. Bloom's Taxonomy is being used as the basis for the differentiation although it is likely that Betts' Autonomous Learner model will be used for the Maori Academy.

Most G&T students have a mentor (who is a member of staff). All Yr 10 have one; about half of Yr 11, 10 of Yr 12 and the scholarship students in yr 13. Staff volunteer for this and have 4-6 students each. In the past the Head of the academy has chosen which student goes with which mentor but the students have asked for some choice and it is likely that will happen next year after a camp early in the year.

In Yr 10 students take a few credits for NCEA in Maths and History.

In Yr 11 they are taught as a class for English, Maths and Science. (5 subjects is the norm)

In Yr 12 they are taught as a class for Maths.

In Yr 13 the scholarship students meet regularly. They have a room to use as a resource base and in the future this will be the place where they find old exam papers, extra readings and more information.

In Yrs 10 – 12 students have some time (3/2 hrs) with staff working on enrichment activities, study skills and being involved in organising school events. The activities vary according to the level but are always really positive, creative sessions. External tutors come in sometimes – another use of the TDI funds.

An annual camp is held with Alfriston and James Cook. This is for 3 days and focuses on problem solving, cooperative learning and leadership activities.

Key issues:

- Getting expertise to support the students at a reasonable price
- Getting staff to buy in to the programme
- Having staff prepared to teach these classes can be an issue

- Getting staff to accept that perfect behaviour is not a requirement of being in the G&T programme
- SMT support
- Release time for the TIC
- Getting a working Maori/PI model is a future focus
- Enrichment out of school is a priority – plays, music, shows
- Developing the number of staff with the skills required in differentiated learning is a slow process
- This model has a strong pedagogical basis

### **Mt Roskill Grammar School**

*Lyndy Watkinson, Enhanced Learning Co-ordinator*

Mt Roskill Grammar School is a decile 4 co-ed school, with 2300 students. The school has run classes for its most able students for about 15 years. They broad band and run classes in A, B and C bands. They also run one A+ class at each of yrs 9 and 10 which is called the Enhanced Learning class. Students are tested in Yr 8 – asTTle for English, PATs for Maths and a MRGS test for Science. These tests, along with interviews of students and information from the contributing schools determine the 30 students who will be placed in the A+ class in Yr 9. Placement can be altered but this is usually done early on in the year or not at all. Parents are informed that students have been placed in this class.

At MRGS in Yr 9, all students are taught in core subjects for everything except Maths where classes are blocked to allow for differing abilities. Students don't take options – they rotate through the 'option' subjects, taking 2 per term.

In Yr 10 they do take options so the Enhanced class operates in English, Science and Social Studies with blocking again for Maths. In Yr 10 the students do a full NCEA Level 1 course. They invariably get the best results in the school.

In Yr 11 most of the students take one pure Science subject at Level 2 and 5 x level 1 subjects. The school is very big, so it is possible to create 6 subject classes for major subjects like English, Maths and Geography.

From Yr 12 on, students are doing mixed level courses. Some departments won't allow students to study ahead of their cohort (eg English) but will allow them to move ahead in allied subjects (Media Studies) if they have skills in that area.

The ELC teaches the class Social Studies in Yr 9 and has done so since she took on this role. This gives her a good knowledge of the students and they often use her as their first point of contact as they move through the school – as do their families.

Each department has its own practices re G&T students and has a key person who acts as a link for any G&T material. Departments have to say how they identify students in their area and how they will cater for their needs.

Teachers tend to teach the ELC class for 2 years then move on and allow someone else to teach it. There has been some resistance to teaching the class, often due to marking concerns. In English the same teacher teaches the class in Yr 9 and then in the following year also.

Each class has a 3 day residential experience. Yr 9 go to Wellington in Term 2; Yr 10 go to the Bay of Islands. The places visited are asked to make the programmes at a high level and this works well. Evening activities focus on group skills and leadership activities.

As funding, time and opportunity allows, students also have access to programmes like Philosophy for children, Rocket making and the normal range of co-curricular activities including debating and Future Problem Solving which are popular with many of the G&T students.

Students review the programme each year and their comments are used to develop it in the following year

Key issues:

- The ELC classes are not a true reflection of the makeup of the school. This has been talked about and while it is a concern in some ways the desire is to have the students in the class who are most able and that isn't always a representative sample
- Closer links have been developed with the Learning Extension department and this has been really beneficial to students at all levels
- Regular meetings are held with other G&T teachers across Auckland, led by the G&T adviser and lots of PD has been available
- Some teachers have expectations of G&T students that aren't realistic. Of course the students are still teenagers and they still do strange things at times, whatever their ability level!
- There is variation in the students' ability across a range of subjects
- At times students have been asked for quite a lot of money to pay for all the 'extras' and this can cause problems for some families

### **Napier Boys' High School**

*Bruce Smith (Deputy Headmaster)*

Napier Boys' is a decile 5 boys' school in Napier city. It has 1100 students.

The G&T programme is unashamedly academic in focus and strives for excellence. Sporting, Leadership and Cultural aspects are also dealt with in their interpretation of G&T but academic effort (if not attainment) has to be part of the mix or students aren't considered for inclusion.

Students are tested in Yr 8 using a NBHS test. Based on this, the classes for Yr 9 are organised. Two or three 'top' classes are created with about 30 students in each. Students are tested twice a year and after each round of testing, places in the 'top' classes are looked at; students are dropped and others promoted. Parents are told their son is in one of the 'top' classes, functions are held with them to outline programmes etc. The school also writes letters home to congratulate them on good performance.

Essentially the 'top' classes complete Yr 10 by then end of Yr 9. At the end of that year classes are reallocated for Yr 10. The very top class then does three level 1 subjects – Maths, Science and History (instead of Social Studies). History was chosen to help the boys extend their transactional writing skills and this is paying dividends further up the school.

The second class takes Maths and Geography (but not Science). Actually in Maths they combine both classes with 3 teachers and teach Level 1, some Level 1 and no Level 1 depending on the boys, but given the small size of the classes they tend to have real success.

In Yr 11, the boys who have passed Science are expected to take Level 1 Physics or Chemistry and this is having benefits in Level 2 Science as students do better.

After Yr 11, students who have gained 12 credits with excellence in a subject have free rein about what they want to take and encouraged to be broad based in their approach. Most boys plan to stay at school til the end of Yr 13, so they don't try and get Level 3 earlier than their peers.

All students who gain excellence in an internal standard are given a certificate at Assembly.

The names of the top academic students each year are displayed at the school office – with a photo and details of their success.

At the start of Yr 12 & 13 a group of Elite performers is chosen, based initially on results the previous year, but also bearing in mind being of 'good character'. These students are recognised at the first assembly of the year; they are given a (sponsored) bag and a special pen to highlight their status; they have first right to go to anything special in the school, they have access to the G&T co-ordinator for anything they need; they have dispensations regarding courses or special programmes.

Some of the elite performers are sportsmen. To attain this status they have to be a NZ rep; they are given a special jacket to wear (10 currently in the school) and can be given time out of subjects to train etc – again with personal dispensation from the DP and only after discussion with him and their parents.

Students also receive badges for academic excellence – with bars for outstanding performance. They also have a special honours tie they can wear.

The Head students and BOT rep are also on the G&T register and can access the TIC. This teacher is usually involved with helping the boys catch up on worked missed because of things like tournaments, or other commitments.

#### Key issues:

- Academic success is at the bottom of this programme
- The school values its academic students and it expects them to do well
- The students are publicly recognised in a number of ways
- The headmaster expects all students to get across the stage once in level 1 to gain an excellence certificate – and most of them manage it!
- There are some very tangible rewards for doing well
- No-one can get away with just doing sport or cultural activities well – they won't feature in the G&T programme unless their work habits are up to scratch
- Personal involvement with senior staff and the personalising of courses are key aspects of this approach

*Chris Saunders, Principal*

Onehunga High School is a decile 3 school with nearly 1600 students.

In recent years the makeup of the students at Onehunga High School has changed dramatically and the school has had to adapt its programmes to best manage these changes.

One response has been to broad band junior classes. There are 14 classes in Yr 9, 1 is taken off the top, 4 are very good, 8 are average and 1 is taken at the bottom level.

Each department has had to write a scheme which has detailed content about how G&T students will be identified and catered for. In the top class, the curriculum has been modified. Departments also take responsibility for managing competitions in their subject area.

Students in this class are accelerated slightly – in Yr 10 they take Level 1 English, Maths and Science.

In the senior school students work on multi level programmes with a view to broadening their curriculum base, not getting them through the system earlier. Some students have individualised programmes to cater for very special needs.

Deans and senior staff spend a lot of time working individually with the families of the more able students.

The school also has access to a range of mentoring programmes for small groups of targeted students.

Key issues:

- The school is responsive to the needs of its community and the G&T programme has developed from this
- The school has a number of innovative links to the business community (Business school, Building and Construction school) and these attract students with specific talents and cater to their needs in a range of non-traditional ways
- The school does not use G&T as a marketing tool
- The school is having real success with whanau based form classes which students have to apply to enter. There are three of these (yr9, 10 and senior) and with specially chosen staff leading them, Maori students are making significant progress
- The school runs a huge co-curricular programme with all staff involved. Sport and the Arts are both strong and these activities help meet the needs of many of the students who have talents in these non-academic areas

### **Rutherford High School**

*Viv Russell, HOD Gifted & Talented*

Rutherford is a decile 5, co-ed school of 1200 students, located in Te Atatu North.

Viv was formerly HOD Learning Support and about six years ago realised that the school was doing little, formally, to support the more able students.

She saw a lack of pastoral care and some mismatch of curriculum content and delivery. No one really took responsibility for the G&T students and their programmes.

Her aim was to bring together the best aspects practice of primary delivery methods and secondary specialist content teaching in supporting the G&T students. To do this she formed a new group – known now as KAL (short for Kaleidoscope; wonderment and awe).

The school had been part of an ICT cluster looking at ICT programmes to enhance G&T programmes, working with Pam Hook (who is now consulting as Hooked on Learning). Pam has been responsible for the staff training and still is. The main focus has been on the SOLO taxonomy (Biggs & Collis 1999). Pam has worked with individual staff this year as part of the TDI project Rutherford has been awarded.

Two staff from each department came together to plan for the G&T programme. The aim was to keep the group relatively small and manageable but with the ability to extend its influence as time went on.

At the end of Yr 8 students are tested using a Rutherford test. Staff also interview the Yr 8 teachers and from this information about 50 students are selected.

The two KAL classes in Yrs 9 & 10 are blocked on the timetable and the same teachers teach both year groups.

The year is divided into four metaconcepts and staff work together to plan what they'll do. Initially the aim was to integrate content but this became a little contrived, so now the focus is on integration of delivery. The expectation is that units will be differentiated. Each term an overview is produced which summarises what each department is working on – it is quite simple but is there for all staff to refer to.

In Yr 9 the metaconcepts are Water; Energy; Community and Change. A camp is held in Term 1 on Goat Island and at this the students are assessed on their snorkelling work for PE; they also do a range of activities in Science, philosophy and adventure based learning. They also have quite a lot of free time to get to know each other and staff.

In Yr 9 the students have to do a Language. They are taken out of the traditional option structure and instead the two KAL classes have 1/3 of the year in each of Performing Arts, Visual Arts and Technology.

In Yr 10 the metaconcepts are Structures, revolution, Journeys and Contrasts. Social Studies is not taught but they take History during the first two topics and Geography in the second two. A language is compulsory but they do options with the other students.

The KAL programme is the first thing put onto the timetable each year.

Showcase evenings are held 2-3 times a year. Parents are very supportive and these are a chance to give them feedback.

The TDI pilot programme is being researched by Tracy Riley and Roger Moltson. Viv believes that one of the reasons that their application was considered for funding was that they had a well established and innovative programme in the junior school.

The programmes are also evaluated in an ongoing way by both staff and students. Students have to name their evaluations and staff are given the full feedback after each term. The main focus is on programme content and



delivery; what worked well and what could have been done differently. Comments have to be justified.

The TDI funding was awarded to implement a programme that supports individualised programmes in the senior school. Nominations were asked for late last year from staff, parents and students. 7 students were chosen for 2006 (all boys). The major cost has been time – each student (and parents) is interviewed by Viv for up to 3 hours to establish the student's needs – academic, social, physical and emotional. The aim is to support them in their passions and in their weaknesses. The numbers this year were deliberately small this year as it has been a good way to start so that processes and systems can be developed . Some of the money has been used to buy in special programmes and develop pathways for the students. Funds have also been used to buy gear – like setting up laptops with web design, video editing, music programmes.

There is some individualised acceleration as a result of the interviews.

Key issues;

- Having staff prepared to teach KAL classes (it is more work)
- Retention of staff who have been trained
- Identifying staff skills in all areas of pedagogy so that appropriate training can occur and students can get the best range of approaches
- Starting a new 'team' was seen by some as potentially threatening by some departments
- Strong pedagogy underpins the KAL programme
- This programme is important to the school – timetabling it first ensures its primacy each year

## **Wainuiomata High School**

*Rob Mill (Principal)*

WHS is a decile 4, co-ed school in Wellington.

They have a 'Gifted kids' programme which is run through the Gifted Kids Charitable Trust in Auckland. Children from Yrs 3 – 10 take part in the programme, which operates one day per week in yrs 3 – 8 and for half a day per week in Yrs 9 & 10. Students have to be members of Wainuiomata High School to be involved in the Yr 9/10 programme but in the other years they come from as far away as Featherstone and Mt Cook school in Wellington city.

WHS initially became involved with the Trust as a means of attracting, retaining and providing for Wainuiomata's top academic students who had previously left the valley for secondary education. In the first year the college funded it themselves, including setting up a special room (child sized toilets etc) and paying for the teacher, which cost about \$100,000. Each school in the programme now pays \$4000 a year and families are asked to contribute about \$5 per session to help with costs. The Trust pays the teacher and all other costs.

Students are chosen by looking at academic results, personal traits, areas of exceptional interest, interviews with peers, group tasks, individual interviews and information gathered from parents.

The HOD Learner Support is the co-ordinator of G&T students but does not take part in the teaching of the students.

A focus is teaching thinking skills with de Bono's 6 thinking hats as a cornerstone to this. There are 7 units like this in the country and they work to an annual plan set down by their Principal and Deputy principal. Each term has a different focus – it was Values when I saw them.

Key issues:

- Parents are keen for their students to be involved
- There is some peer pressure, especially in Yr 9 & 10 which means that students are less inclined to miss their regular classes to take part
- Some mainstream staff don't actively support the programme and still expect students to catch up on work missed
- The teacher is absolutely critical to the success of the programme
- Given the \$4000 cost pa, this programme is seen as being good value for money. However if WHS had to pay for the total cost they couldn't sustain it in its present form
- The Gifted kids programme has received funding through the TDI programme for the next 3 years
- The gifted kids programme is not the only answer to dealing with these students – the 20 students in the programme are gifted every day of the week!
- WHS has a focus on differentiated learning. This is the main thrust of all professional development in the school and receives the majority of funds. This work, along with the Gifted kids programme is seen by the Principal as providing a sound base for the G&T students in the school. Students are placed in multi-level classes and staff are team teaching to try and better meet the needs of all students, whatever their level.

## **Waiopahu College**

*Steve Browne (Principal)*

Waiopahu is a decile 3 secondary school in Levin with 600 students.

In recent years the G&T programme has been through a number of iterations, each dependant on the staff member in charge of the programme. A new staff member has just been appointed and the plans are underway as to what will happen from now on. From now on this teacher will work with other core teachers using the TKI gifted resources initially to support students in core classes.

The focus is on the top two form classes in Yr 9 & 10. the 'top' class is academically more able than the others; the second class has good students with sound work habits but is not at the same level.

The 'top' class is extended rather than accelerated through the curriculum. Students are encouraged to take part in competitions and quizzes and about 1/3 of them take advantage of these opportunities.

Students with particular subject strengths have access to Correspondence school programmes. These are run through the Learner Support department and students get their work from the Learner Support dept and go there to do their work. This means able students are working alongside less able and there is reduced stigma about going to Learner Support.

Key issues:

- Having the right person to drive the programme is a key to its success
- Extension not acceleration is the philosophy
- Using external resources at minimal cost to the school has been a focus
- Managing the students doing Correspondence school work has been a focus. This is working well and is seen as a good model by TCS.

### **Key findings**

- The abilities of the teacher of any special programme are central to the success of the programme.
- Special programmes are expensive and in many cases have been funded by outside agencies or MOE contestable funding pools. Sustainability becomes an issue in these cases.
- Most schools are focussing on upskilling staff in differentiated learning so that all students can be better catered for (a rising tide lifts all ships)
- There are as many models as there are schools – and most schools seem happy with what they are currently doing, although they would like to do more if they had the funding available
- Learner Support departments are involved in many schools. While they don't always deliver the programmes they are involved with identification, funding and sometimes supplementing programmes
- Active support from Board and Principals is key if the programmes are to develop
- Where it is appropriate, public recognition of success is seen as being very important – with boys especially
- Tangible rewards are used in many cases – prizes, camps, outings, speakers
- Active support from the Senior staff/Principal/BOT is essential to get a programme working in the school. It needs some staff time and some funding at the very least
- Curriculum based and skill based programmes are offered, often in tandem. Most schools are keen to develop students' thinking skills as part of their programme
- Accelerating students slightly, even if it's to get a few credits in Yr 10 is popular. In most cases the aim isn't to give students one year less at college – it's to give greater choice of subject in the senior school and often to give a better grounding in pure sciences

- Regional clusters are developing, often through personal contacts and these are seen as valuable and supportive. In some areas the schools actively work together (eg camps) while in others the teachers meet to share ideas and issues
- A range of theories/taxonomies are used but many schools are basing their programmes in sound pedagogical theory
- Pastoral care of G&T students (and their families) is seen as key by many schools
- Information sessions/show and tell evenings are used by several schools as a good way to feed back to parents

**Julia Davidson**  
**Principal, Aotea College**  
**September 2006**

## Sabbatical timetable

<b>July 3</b> <b>Bangkok -</b> <b>Paris</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> <b>Re</b> <b>to</b>
<b>31</b> <b>Meeting with</b> <b>DP</b>	<b>August 1</b>	<b>2</b>  <b>School concert</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Rising</b> <b>Tides</b> <b>conference</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Rising</b> <b>Tides</b> <b>conference</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Rising</b> <b>Tides</b> <b>conference</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>  <b>Wainuiomata</b> <b>High School</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> <b>Motivation &amp;</b> <b>leadership</b> <b>course</b>	<b>10</b> <b>Motivation</b> <b>&amp;</b> <b>leadership</b> <b>course</b>	<b>11</b> <b>Bishop</b> <b>Viard</b> <b>College</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>

14 Waiopahu College	15 Napier Girls' Napier Boys'	16 Hastings Girls'	17	18 Creative NZ meeting for NZSSC	19	20
21 National Barbershop champs - Hamilton	22 Fraser High School	23 Hamilton Boys' High School	24 Auckland Girls' Grammar School	25 Mt Roskill Grammar School	26	27
28 Alfriston College Westlake Girls' re NZSSC	29 Edgewater College	30 Onehunga High School	31 The Manurewa High School	September 1 Rutherford High School	2	3
4	5 VUWCOE AP/DP workshop	6 Meeting with architect/HODPE Meeting with Lynn Scott	7	8 RTL reference group meeting	9	10
11 Meeting with DP	12 RTL mtg Secondary Futures	13 Secondary Futures workshop	14 Aotea G&T planning day	15	16	17
18	19 Meeting at Wgtn Girls' re EHSAS	20	21 Mana Education Centre Trust meeting	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	Oct 1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8