

# Module 2

## English for gifted and talented pupils

### A note on terminology

The term used in these training materials is *able pupils*. Many teachers are currently more familiar with the broader term 'able' than with 'gifted and talented' which is now the DfES term for pupils whose ability is beyond conventional expectation. EiC uses 'gifted and talented', defined as the top 5–10% of pupils in a school. 'Gifted' pupils in an EiC cohort have latent or evident high ability in academic subjects, while 'talented' pupils have latent or evident high ability in a creative or expressive art or a sport.

### Background to the module

This optional training module is intended to support English departments considering their provision for more able pupils. It presents a collaborative working session lasting approximately 75 minutes, and is addressed to those who will present the module. It is designed to follow the introductory module 1, which considers whole-school issues related to the identification and teaching of more able pupils generally, but can be used independently. Suggestions about how a department might follow up this training session are included at the end of the module.

You need to download and print off the materials.

The module contains:

- guidance for the head of department (or other presenter) on leading the session;
- the pre-module task, which should be copied for all participants;
- copies of OHT slides, which can be copied onto OHT acetates or projected from a computer;
- handouts, which should be copied for all participants.

In working through the session, departments will probably identify issues that they wish to pursue further. At several points, signposts to further guidance are included to help support such work locally.

## Preparation and pre-module task

As presenter, you should familiarise yourself with the session notes and resources. It is important to have copies of the departmental scheme of work available, and helpful to provide evidence of pupils' work or teacher planning from within the school to supplement or complement the material provided.

## Audience

- English departments in middle and secondary schools

## Aims

*(These assume a previous core module for the whole school on general issues.)*

- To help teachers identify able pupils
- To promote ways of using Framework objectives to structure the learning of able pupils
- To develop a teaching repertoire that can support and challenge able pupils in English
- To identify the next steps for English departments in relation to able pupils

## You will need

OHTs 2.1–2.5

Handouts 2.1–2.7

For each participant:

- *Framework for teaching English: Years 7, 8 and 9*
- Sample lesson plans and the school's scheme of work

## Module overview

**75 minutes**

Pre-module task	
Introduction	5 minutes
Structuring learning through objectives	30 minutes
The teaching repertoire	30 minutes
Enrichment beyond the classroom	5 minutes
Next steps for English departments	5 minutes

## Pre-module task

- Look at the work of able pupils in **handout 2.1**. This work provides a reference point for the session.
- Identify a pupil from the school's current Year 8 cohort who is among the ablest pupils in English in the year.
- Review that pupil's work in relation to the checklist in **handout 2.2**, highlighting as appropriate
- Compare that pupil's characteristics with the characteristics of other pupils in the school reviewed by colleagues.

The checklist, which lists possible characteristics of pupils who are able in English, relates closely to the curriculum guidance from QCA and EiC.

## Introduction

5 minutes

Refer to the whole-school module, which should already have established the key points about the individuality of able pupils, the importance of avoiding stereotyping, and the challenge to identify those who are able but not (yet) high attaining. Make only brief reference to the general issues dealt with in that introductory whole-school module and to the pre-course task. Explain that the term 'able' equates with the cohort of pupils now known as 'gifted and talented' in DfES/EiC/QCA terminology.

Use **OHT 2.1** to introduce the session.

### Aims

OHT 2.1

- To help teachers identify able pupils
- To promote ways of using Framework objectives to structure the learning of able pupils
- To develop a teaching repertoire that can support and challenge able pupils in English
- To identify the next steps for English departments in relation to able pupils

### The key

'It is getting the teaching right that is the key to it.  
That is our experience over and over again.'  
*NAGC in House of Commons Report*

Make these points:

- Inclusion involves recognising the rights and needs of able pupils. This is not about elitism; it is about entitlement.
- The House of Commons report recommended that all schools and LEAs should see the needs of able pupils as a priority.
- Ofsted evidence indicates that many schools could do better, and that the schools that do well by their able pupils also do well by all pupils.
- The EiC definition of 'gifted and talented' pupils as being the top 5–10% has been very productive, and has ensured that all non-selective schools are included.
- The EiC initiative has shown the value of extending provision through collaboration between schools and local partnerships, which include higher education institutions.
- It is vital to identify and support able pupils who underachieve in English, especially if such pupils have English as an additional language. Some able pupils do not enjoy English nor display their ability in the context of English classrooms.
- Every English department should consider having a designated coordinator for able pupils.
- Effective identification is important, but should not distract schools from making appropriate provision the priority. Identification is not an end in itself; it is a means to improving the match between provision and individual abilities and needs.

## Structuring learning through objectives

30 minutes

Use **OHT 2.2** to clarify guiding principles.

### Planning from the Framework

**OHT 2.2**

Planning based on Framework objectives can ensure that the learning experiences for able pupils:

- Add breadth (e.g. a broader range of texts and tasks)
- Give depth (e.g. more detail and complexity)
- Accelerate the pace of learning (e.g. tackling objectives earlier)
- Develop higher-order learning skills (e.g. analysis, synthesis, evaluation)
- Promote independence
- Support reflection and self-evaluation

Make these points:

- These principles underpin planning for all pupils, but they are particularly important in relation to able pupils.
- Able pupils often benefit from the opportunity to shape their own learning in unanticipated ways.
- Effective differentiation is important, since a support for lower attainers can become a constraint for higher attainers.
- It is not appropriate for able pupils just to be given more work to do of a similar nature to that done by others; they benefit from tasks that are different, rather than merely longer.
- Higher-order learning skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation should not be left to develop incidentally; they should be planned progressively into sequences of teaching and learning.
- Progression in English is neither simple nor linear; it involves the orchestration of a range of interdependent skills with increasing sensitivity to context, audience and purpose.

Use **OHT 2.3** to develop the general principles in terms of specific strategies.

<p><b>Ways of using objectives for acceleration, extension and enrichment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cluster objectives</li><li>• Apply objectives in different contexts</li><li>• Increase the level of challenge</li><li>• Choose and use objectives from later years</li><li>• Select extension objectives</li><li>• Negotiate objectives</li><li>• Encourage self-evaluation</li></ul>	<p><b>OHT 2.3</b></p>
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Notes for presenters:

- **Cluster objectives.** Able pupils can cope with more complex tasks that involve the orchestration of combinations of objectives.
- **Apply objectives in different contexts.** Pupils' skills and understanding can be developed through addressing objectives in new and challenging contexts.
- **Increase the level of challenge.** Develop higher-order skills such as analysis and synthesis through activities that focus on the same objectives but demand greater subtlety, complexity or abstraction.

- **Choose and use objectives from later years.** Where there is a clear 'strand' of progression, objectives from subsequent years can be used to accelerate progress.
- **Select extension objectives.** Able pupils might benefit from engaging with extension objectives that go beyond the usual expectations for Key Stage 3.
- **Negotiate objectives.** Involve able pupils in deciding which objectives to address in order to develop higher-order skills and become increasingly independent learners.
- **Encourage self-evaluation.** Promote reflection through a focus on objectives that involve reflection on what has been achieved and what could be done next.

## Activity

The task is to provide a school example (or examples) for each of the strategies suggested in **OHT 2.3** and exemplified in **handout 2.3**.

- Each pair of participants should focus on a different strategy for 10 minutes. They begin by looking at the example given and then identify examples, taken from or based on elements of the existing scheme of work, that relate to that strategy. If possible, they should include the objectives being addressed. (Draft extension objectives for Key Stage 3 are available as **handout 2.4**.)
- As a whole group, share and discuss the school examples for up to 15 minutes. Note on a board or flipchart what is already being done to address the needs of able pupils, and what more could be done.

## The teaching repertoire

**30 minutes**

Remind participants that the lesson structure recommended in the Key Stage 3 Strategy has four elements:

- **starter** activity, which is interactive and focused on a specific objective;
- **introduction** featuring demonstration not just explanation;
- **development** in which pupils apply what they have learned;
- **plenary** review of what has been learned.

Each element presents different challenges to the teacher and requires different strategies in relation to the needs of able pupils. Some of those challenges, and strategies for dealing with them, are in **handout 2.5**, 'Challenges and strategies'.

## Activity

- Pairs of participants look at two sample lesson plans based on the Key Stage 3 Year 9 exemplar poetry unit *The Faces of War* (**handout 2.6**). The unit is available on [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3).
- The pairs then use the checklist (**handout 2.5**) to identify ways in which the needs of able pupils have been or could be addressed in the sample lessons.
- Each pair joins with another pair to compare and discuss impressions. These small groups then review a sequence of lessons from the department's own scheme of work in relation to the checklist, highlighting strategies that do or could address the needs of able pupils, and keeping a note of new ideas.
- For the final 10 minutes the whole group discuss how well the departmental sample lessons meet the identified challenges in each of the five sections and note possibilities for development.

## Enrichment

5 minutes

Emphasise that enrichment can come in the classroom, then use **OHT 2.4** to outline possibilities for enrichment beyond the classroom, drawing on local examples wherever possible.

### Possibilities for enrichment

**OHT 2.4**

- Easter or summer schools for able pupils
- School reading clubs or writing groups
- Collections of book reviews written and edited by pupils for pupils
- School website creation and editing
- Scripts or interviews for school or local radio
- Seminars or masterclasses at local colleges or universities
- Mentoring of able pupils, in person or via e-mail
- Residential courses with writers and actors, e.g. Stratford
- Visits to places of literary interest, e.g. Wordsworth's cottage

Make these points:

- We need a broad image of what it means to be able in English, rather than a narrow one confined to academic reading and writing. For example, some pupils are particularly talented in drama, but are not exceptional writers.

- It is important to celebrate the abilities of EAL pupils and of pupils who are able but do not always achieve in conventional contexts.
- If access to stimulating opportunities is limited to those whose abilities have already been identified, other pupils may never have the chance to discover or demonstrate what they can do.
- Students in higher education, especially but not only those training to be teachers, are a rich potential resource as mentors.
- Trainee teachers can offer support to able pupils during their time on school placement, and continue the contact electronically afterwards, as long as that contact is appropriately monitored.
- Local media can provide a challenging audience for able pupils as writers or as speakers.
- Summer schools for able pupils need to be ambitious if they are to be worthwhile: the Peers School, Oxford, built a successful summer school around exploration of the medieval idea of beauty.
- EiC partnerships between schools and higher education institutions are proving very productive.
- Writers in schools schemes and drama workshops with local theatre groups offer particular opportunities for able pupils.
- Individual pupils in different schools can be put in contact with each other through teacher networks.
- Visits to literary or linguistic events are valuable for any pupils, but can be particularly valuable for able pupils. For example, rather than going on a traditional theatre visit, it might be possible to arrange for able pupils to meet and talk with cast members or the producer.

Refer briefly to **handout 2.7**, the characteristics of departments that Ofsted found to be effective in providing for able pupils.

## Next steps for English departments

5 minutes

Finish with **OHT 2.5** and decide on tangible, manageable next steps for the department.

**Ready for more?****OHT 2.5**

Choose **one** or **two** of the following next steps for the department.

- Write the job description for a coordinator for able pupils in your department.
- Review the Key Stage 3 patterns of achievement of able pupils to identify what is being done well and what could be done differently.
- Track the progress of two or three individual able pupils and help them to develop individual targets in English.
- Identify local enrichment opportunities.
- As a department, review a unit of work in relation to the needs of able pupils.
- Find out more about the resources available for teachers of able pupils.
- Investigate the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth.
- Make contact with local higher education providers.