January 2003, Foundation Essay 5: Teaching the Highly Able. How the needs of highly able pupils in Religious Education can be met in an ordinary comprehensive school. Identifying the particular needs that relate to RE, giving a range of examples to show how lessons and homework tasks can be planned to ensure that such pupils are suitably challenged.

Being very highly able presents a form of Special Educational Need (SEN) yet one at the opposite end of the spectrum from the range of pupils where SEN work usually applies. SEN tracking can be a means by which a pupil is identified as highly able.

There needs to be a distinction between the able and those who are so highly able that they present a challenge to ordinary differentiation within the classroom. This is not to exclude differentiation within the classroom as one solution to incorporating the highly able, but shows the extent of the challenge.

Concerns include detection through various means, including testing and teaching. How an actual school deals with the matter leads to wider issues. Actually working with pupils and teacher comments gives clues to detecting and facilitating the gifted, arguably using religious literacy.

The School (the name is withheld: a capital S is used) policy recognises the distinction between gifted and talented as these labels apply nationally.

> The DfEE adopted the phrase ‘gifted and talented’ to define the pupils with whom the strategy is concerned. ‘Gifted’ refers to those with high ability or potential in academic subjects and ‘talented’ to those with high ability or potential in the expressive or creative arts or sport. (Ofsted, 2001, page 2)

The School used to use the term *able and more able pupils* in the 1999 policy. From February 2002, “gifted” has meant pupils with high ability or potential significantly higher than their peers in one or more National Curriculum subjects excluding Art, Music and Physical Education. “Talented” means pupils who show high ability or potential significantly higher than their peers in areas physical, creative or expressive (The School, February 2002, 1). On the face of it both exclude Religious Education, as it is not in the National Curriculum, but the teacher with co-ordinating responsibility, whom I interviewed (Interview, 18 December 2002), includes RE in the Gifted definition and so does the Ofsted report on *Excellence in Cities* (Ofsted 2001, 28-29).

This separation raises the issue of multiple intelligences, where such distinctions are made. According to Shephard, Howard Gardner (1999, quoted in Shephard, 2001, 3 - 8) has suggested some 11 or 12 intelligences, although Montgomery (1996, 19) counts seven from Gardner. Ornstein (1993, also quoted in Shephard, 2001, 3 - 8) has suggested all talents are intelligences and there may be 30 or 40. Montgomery (1996, 19) points out that the debate between those who think intelligence is separated and those who think it is unitary has lasted for many decades. She criticises intelligences by outcome as anecdotal evidence, and the same may be said

of much of Shephard's whole brain thinking and learning approach. Nevertheless Shephard (2001) uses intelligences as a way of providing a holistic view of the brain, whereas the educational separation of "gifted" and "talented" in national, LEA (East Riding of Yorkshire Council, 2000, 1) and school policy has the effect of relegating talent in aesthetic and kinaesthetic forms as something external after cognitive giftedness, despite the danger of losing cross creativity.

Being talented is regarded as something likely to have greatest effect outside of school to which the school gives support (Interview, 2002). Examples may include parents who put their child through the tennis club with strong coaching, or music lessons to a high level. These are picked up by the school's system of recording including teacher assessments, primary school transfer data, qualitative information, outside the school information and parental requests for information.

Shephard himself suggests that each person like Piccasso, Mozart, Tiger Woods and Leonardo da Vinci (Shephard, 2001, 3 - 14) can be classed as a genius in their own right, whereas giftedness normally demonstrates genius (Albert Einstein, Marie Curie and Mozart - again) and can be measured through Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests. For IQ schools now use Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT scores) which are core subject based. Shephard himself recommends measuring across intelligences to produce a more holistic result, rather as people might measure their own styles and

preferences for learning. Thus for Shephard, IQ cannot be the only measure.

Giftedness, he states, using Renzulli (1986, not fully referenced, but also see Montgomery, 1996, 12), is above average ability, task commitment and absorption and creativity with original thinking. He also quotes Feldhausen (1986, not fully referenced) to say that:

> …giftedness is a predisposition for superior learning and performance. (Shephard, 2001, 3 - 14)

This is criticised by Montgomery who points out just how malleable intelligence is, as evidenced by the practice of hothousing (1996, 33, 38-39) where parents in particular generate a talent or gift into their child to give them a flying start. This whole area is a nature versus nurture argument around intelligence itself (Curzon, 1997, 421-423)

With CAT scores of 120 plus, and 2% of the population regarded as gifted and talented, the Policy Document (The School, 2002) expects up to 50 pupils could be counted. In fact, the teacher with responsibility said that on this basis there would be over 100 pupils in every year who could be regarded as gifted and talented (Interview, 2002). So the actual policy requires consistent CAT scores of 120+ across all subjects so measured and indeed a gifted policy only properly has full effect with CAT scores of 130 plus. Then come verbal and non-verbal assessments and high average classroom marks.

The approach of *Excellence in Cities* is different by taking a percentage across the board in all schools, so that no school misses out.

> A key feature of Excellence in Cities is that all schools are expected to identify 5% to 10% of pupils in each year as gifted and talented. These pupils are described as those who achieve, or have the ability to achieve, at a level significantly in advance of the average for their year group in the school. (Ofsted, 2001, 12)

The result of this is to put into that programme pupils of very different abilities and indeed Ofsted itself sees dilution happening at greater percentages (2001,13). It is unclear why 5 to 10% is the operating figure (also in East Riding of Yorkshire Council, 2000) when bell curves count 2% as highly able (as does The School, 2002) (see Montgomery, 1996, 31: also displaying 14% slow, 68% average, 14% able). So, perversely, a parent might not choose the best school for their child in order to enter the *Excellence in Cities* programme.

It would be better to choose an objective basis for inclusion rather than a percentage as the distribution to schools is uneven. At the School far fewer are included than might be by raising the level.

Excellence in Cities has produced one funded model for external additional work for pupils. The intention is that schools collaborating can internalise the benefits between team building co-ordinators and subject staff (Ofsted, 2001, 34, 40), although this is not certain (see Ofsted, 2001, 9). Another is the New Opportunities Fund adding to the standards Fund which promotes study

support, homework clubs, mentors and cultural institutions. There are summer schools and masterclasses too (East Riding of Yorkshire Council, 2000, 10).

> There is a risk that specially funded work to improve provision for the gifted and talented develops a life of its own and is not sufficiently connected with the main structures, systems and developments in the school. (Ofsted, 2001, 44)

External collaborative work has further side effects. A friend whose daughter (in another school) attends an external programme every week for Modern Foreign Languages, for the purpose of acceleration to AS *Level (Early Advanced Levels Flexibility*, see East Riding of Yorkshire Council, 2000, 10), finds that it takes three hours to travel and attend its one hour session and then work back at school is missed.

There are two main parts to working with the gifted: detection and delivering a curriculum at the correct level. In the first place detection cannot be divorced from curriculum because curriculum can itself facilitate detection as well as delivery. Secondly, detection with curriculum takes place through the medium of subjects. RE has a particular role to play in that it deals with naturally abstracting subject matter and there is a parallel between the development of religious literacy and the development of educational skills and abilities.

Detection is important to the School. Names are put into a grid and circulated to gain more information. Any pupil identified as gifted has a mark to the effect in relevant registers. Every faculty and teacher must know who are more and highly able.

For the School, delivery options include acceleration and enriching. Acceleration means learning faster and is rare. It is convenient (for any school) if a year is skipped and one girl in the School was moved up a whole year.

Enrichment is the most likely method, and yet this presents problems. A teacher cannot be expected to put in the extra work which goes into enrichment within lessons at a gifted level (Interview, 2002). This point is reflected in some literature:

> The teacher can scarcely spare the time to prepare genuine enrichment exercises for a few bright pupils and do justice to the others as well. (Laycock, 1979, 135)

Such additional enrichment beyond the normal range therefore takes place outside the School (as with *Excellence in Cities*). An initiative is “Projects”, so that there is a Geography Project for Year 7 pupils which links with the University. Sometimes, however, there are initiatives within, as in a practice now halted where sixth formers addressed much younger gifted pupils.

In the course of the interview I suggested that this approach could lead to a number of bored pupils within ordinary classes. This must be a danger within schools. A survey of schooling of twelve bright pupils in a school from January 1979 produced these findings: routine won over higher skills, few pupils found the lessons stimulating, little homework was open ended (and seldom stimulated further study), lessons were too slow in pace and peer

group pressure existed so that no individual would appear too bright. (Street, 1983, in Wallace, 1983, 156)

The dynamic, then, from school and pupil can be to moderate or hide giftedness. Ordinary classroom differentiated work (upwards), if provided, is set well within the capabilities of the gifted pupil. It frees time for differentiation downwards, towards the more limited definition of Special Educational Needs, where work must be provided for the least able.

My interest has especially been in the area of the most gifted pupils, and I have noted how some pupils have responded positively to aspects of the work I have presented. My work has been criticised as too conceptual and at a high language level. The danger of this is so highlighted:

> All but one of the teachers used a great deal of what might be called ‘text-book language’, which, though not specific to the subject, referred to important concepts and processes… They seemed to be unaware that they used this language, or that it might provide difficulties in comprehension, or otherwise affect pupils’ participation in the lesson. (Barnes, 1972, 116)

Whereas:

> The language of one teacher was much more colloquial and less like written prose than that of the others. (The fact that this was accompanied by an unusually high level of pupil participation suggests a topic for investigation.) (Barnes, 1972, 116)

I have put a stress on the upper end of achievement and have used language to carry ideas. The question has been how much each student

can be stretched, even, in some cases, to cut off points. Can all students receive something, while many achieve more?

A demand is to make all teaching materials fully communicative. However, I have not followed a view expressed by a teacher that work should be provided in concrete learning form only and that abstract thinking pupils will make more of the material themselves.

> As Rader (1976, 36) put it “Cream always rises to the top.” It is thus argued, by some people, that special support for the gifted involves providing help where none is needed, which is at the very least unfair. Even worse, such provision for the gifted tends to siphen off resources which would be put to better use with more deserving groups, whom nature has placed at a disadvantage. (McLeod, Cropley, 1989, 5).

Instead, pupils who are likely to be early in gaining abstract and higher level thought need encouraging and guiding rather than being left to their own devices. The work provided should be such that there is material available for concrete thinkers and also abstract thinkers. Not all pupils will understand everything, but understand as much as they can.

This relates to the theories of Vygotsky who promoted accelerated process learning. It stresses method over outcome, so that children are encouraged to pursue why something is the case rather than what is the case. It also means that identifying the gifted falls into potential more than actual (Montgomery, 1996, 58) as the Zone of Proximal Development is the difference between actual developmental level and the potential

development level when under guidance (Curzon, 1997, 110; Burton, 2001, 240-241). The communication language level does matter, perhaps offering cognitive conflict for the purposes of improvement. Gifted people then need high language levels. Cognitive Accelerated Education takes place in Science (CASE) and Mathematics (CAME) as a critical way of improving learning across the curriculum. However, tends to lead to abstract learning by its very subject matter and for the benefit of other subjects.

This is not to say that RE does not follow concrete learning. It does, by creating lists, facts and evidences out of abstract beliefs. The Year 7 Holy Week diary lessons did this (November to December 2002), creating literalism out of this form of genre writing. The subject matter was far deeper and still offered potential transformation to the abstract.

There is an interesting take on the concrete-abstract continuum in Morrison and McIntyre (1969). They see it as a teaching style because teachers with concrete characteristics:

> ...are likely to impose goals, provide detailed means to attainment, and show less tolerance of pupils' deviations from goals and standards. They are more likely to make use of functional explanation of rules and of unexplained rules, are particularly concerned with laying down procedure, and are more punitive. (Morrison, McIntyre, 1969, 137)

The abstract teacher is somewhat more flexible and even trusting:

> Abstractness, characterized by flexible and sophisticated belief systems and preference for a complex structure environment, is associated with a greater warmth towards pupils, more

> perceptiveness of pupils' needs, flexibility in meeting needs and interests, relaxed classroom relationships, task involvement and child participation. (Morrison, McIntyre, 1969, 137-138)

I prefer to aim for the latter, and distrust the behaviourist input and output model. In classroom teaching use of objectives on the board to copy down is only because it puts pupils on task and provides reliable revision material for some. However, whilst a teacher may revert back to the concrete model according to need, the latter model is preferred and especially so for the highly able. The teacher is to facilitate guidance but to enhance not stifle creativity.

There is a warning that religious literacy and giftedness in RE is not the same (QCA, 2002a). This is questionable because religious literacy is held by the informed atheist as much as by any believer. The atheist is as much capable of giftedness in RE as the believer, and to move beyond basic literalism, the obvious and ordinary, with a sophisticated view of religious symbols and metaphors, grasp the numinous or mysterious and argue against it, and see how RE is a cultural and cross curricular phenomenon (relating to history, media, geography, poetry and prose and use of number). If RE is ultimately about nonsense, it is still *thinking* about nonsense and remains a social and cultural phenomenon. RE also takes its place in using texts, analysing and researching, and is another means of in depth thinking. (See QCA, 2002a). Thus it is possible to chart stages of faith as an educational insight:

	Name of Stage	Description	Possible Ages	Transition out
1	Intuitive Projective	Unrestrained fantasy with first self-awareness with taboos and possible terror	3 to 7 years	Concrete operational thinking
2	Mythic Literal	Absorbs stories anthropomorphically and beliefs of the community with literalism and surface meaning of symbols	Broad school age	Story conflict
3	Synthetic Conventional	New significant others going beyond the family force conformity, ideology and authority	Teenage into adult	Clashes in authority
4	Individuative Reflective	Faith moves beyond significant others with confidence in the self whilst ideological constructs remain unintegrated for the world beyond	Young adulthood to middle age	One's own critical system pluralises and self-history impedes
5	Conjunctive	The self and ideology join up as do symbols and concepts where paradoxes and opposites are accepted so that transcendance and relativity run together	After mid-life	Recognition that the world is untransformed even if the vision is integrated
6	Universalising	The self transforms itself by incarnating into fully inclusive universalising love (yet seen outside as a threat to systems)	After mid-life if at all	No further transition

(Fowler, 1995, 133-134, 149-150, 172-173, 182-183, 197-198, 200-201)

The stages of faith approach shows increasing abstraction, and is also a whole brain approach (Shephard, 1996) striving towards greater holism. It first

echoes Piaget's cognitive approach (Burton, 2001, 237-238) and then later Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Curzon, 1997, 122-124). It is less optimistic for each age than the Levels in the QCA non-statutory guidance, which also move towards greater abstraction and evaluation (see *RE PGCE Handbook 2002-2003,* 2002, 118-119). From observation and teaching, Fowler's scheme is the more realistic. Whilst stages 2, 3 and 4 are the most relevant, nevertheless, just as some adults stay within literalism, so gifted teenagers should be in advance of their years.

This mapping is criticised because some traditions value literalism, such as the Hafiz who remembers by rote the content of the whole Qur'an. A gifted orthodox Christian would still consider written texts and evaluate.

Identification goes wider. In classes, opportunities like the creation of Id-ul-Fitr cards (in December 2002, Appendix 3) revealed calligraphic Arabic skills, for example, where giftedness might be found within Islam. Here the dual intelligences approach fails, because abstraction involves aesthetics, empathy and creativity. Nevertheless RE teachers should, through knowing pupils, professionalism, and their own religious literacy, identify all highly able pupils.

In a secondary school, this is quite difficult, especially when writing and literacy may be well below other abilities (Leyden, 1985, 68-70). Identification needs more talk, less dependence on writing, cultural sensitivity, avoidance of labelling, realisation that giftedness can be

nurtured, looking for different opportunities for discovery, looking for multilingual abilities, rechecking expectations (and to be surprised), looking within peer groups, allowing children to take the initiative with learning and checking the environment (see Freeman, 1998).

Year 7 Holy Week diary writing had material in it consistent with a purely literalist view as if, day by day, events took place that could be recorded with a camera, as if no writing and religious interpretation had first taken place. So, to counter this, concrete learners continued to write and think as they would (because they cannot achieve abstraction), whereas others were invited to respond to more sophisticated insights (see Appendix 1).

This happened after some weeks of particularly dazzling and responsive classes. If they responded so well in classroom discussion, then it was necessary to raise the level, and indeed they matched the raised level.

I therefore went further and started to present material on the resurrection as a "transformed body" (16 December). This resurrected Jesus clearly was not the same body as the one injured and crippled if precisely the one which suffered on the cross. I taught the class about the appearances: that in the text the disciples first receive a presence, they do not know what or who it is, the meaning of it happens, then he is recognised as Jesus, and then he disappears. The body, if it is one, goes through walls, vanishes, and a lot of it is a good story. The material, then, is abstract by its nature: it is belief.

Someone raised the issue therefore of Doubting Thomas. My abstract level reply was that this was the writer of the Gospel of John criticising Christian followers of Thomas for not believing in a bodily resurrection but some other kind, and thus they created this story against those followers. Given this reply, I asked pupils what they thought the resurrection was (and later developed materials for a more formal approach in later lessons). It was interesting to see just how many could not get away from a simpler notion of the one and same body and person moving about before and after death.

So many pupils wanted to continue to insist that the body must have got off the cross, and I replied Muslims indeed believe Jesus did not die on the cross but was raised up afterwards. A very telling question asked from a pupil was how the raised Jesus died again. My reply yet again stressed that it was not the same kind of body, but in any case the story says he went to heaven where he sits on the right hand side of God the Father. Again literalism had ruled.

The difficulty here is that some Christians do see it as all historical as if a video camera could be taken there, or a diary could be written, but for a specialist this does violence to the texts and, if trying to simplify, the message taught was that there is a little history in places and much story telling in the gospels written some perhaps 40 years after events may have happened.

Yet one pupil, just the one, said that for him there was a Jesus, but the rest is just written about for some belief effect. He spoke carefully and slowly and his words were well framed. It may be that this pupil was repeating something his parents had said. However, assuming not, this would be the start of detecting him as gifted because he shifted the focus creatively.

Whereas most children could not get away from the body as a solid object, no matter what was said, he, having listened, shifted the focus to the writing. I immediately said to the class, "This is a very brave opinion," and gave its expression support. It is sometimes assumed in RE that teachers teach agreement in religion. Rather, RE is taught so that pupils have information and gain the ability to think. On a number of occasions RE has been justified in lessons by saying it generates the ability to think and is useful therefore for their other subjects.

The pupil who shifted emphasis is normally quiet yet here he had given a clue to his own cognitive processes. A skilled teacher should generate or identify this shift and see if it was consistent. A teacher cannot do this if only concrete teaching is provided, for which the pupil believes only a behaviourist concrete response is required (where the objectives become the outcome which become the assessment). He had, of course, been writing the diary like everyone else. Perhaps he had been underperforming (Ofsted, 2001, 3).

There was another Year 7 pupil taught, about whom a warning had been given regarding his difficult behaviour. He never presented a behavioural problem because he is very religiously literate and this was used. Investigation revealed he comes from a religious family. Nevertheless he might not be regarded as gifted. He made full and leading contributions in a very positive way, and could have the means to develop more abstractly, yet there was a difference in kind between the quiet pupil who carefully worded his shift of emphasis and insight, and this one full of the basic concrete knowledge. Whilst this pupil should be challenged to extend his knowledge and how to think, the quiet pupil was doing it already and presented a challenge for further relevant differentiated teaching.

Contact with Year 10 has been limited but another area of detection was marking work. In the School, Year 10 took mock GCSE exams (the shorter GCSE is taken a year early by all students, not due to high ability but a behaviour strategy to give incentive to RE classes in the difficult Year 9). In each section, the rigid marking scheme gave 1 or 2 marks for the first question, 2, 4 or 6 marks for the second question, 2, 4, 6 or 8 marks for the third question, and 1, 2, 3 or 4 marks for the fourth question. It was theoretically possible therefore to achieve requirements and gain 100%. The best score marked by me was 86% but another teacher's pupil achieved 93%. When compared, it was clear, and teacher comment supported this, that the 93% achievement was through a very well memorised and syllabus reproduced paper. The 86% was different in that it had a very confident and well developed English literacy that carried and

projected further the obvious recall of RE syllabus facts. The sentences flowed, the was a line of argument throughout, there was understanding, and there were also very few spelling mistakes. Formative assessment given to the 86% student was that she was “gifted in the subject” but not to be complacent for the real exam. The marking scheme might not favour the breadth of such a likely gifted approach (though this was still exceptionally good recall), but the whole look, feel and quality of writing was evident. This achievement was in a class where the marks ranged from grade G to grade A*, as this was itself A*. It would be important to further challenge this pupil, not because the GCSE result will rise any further, but because the ability is there to face greater challenges.

In Year 9 a homework experiment was conducted. Although Gandhi and the evidences of ahimsa (with added satyagraha) were taught, the homework was offered with a standard question and an advanced question with higher potential marks (Appendix 2). The take-up was low. The higher question asked for Internet work linking Gandhi to Thoreau and Tolstoy. This was taught later anyway as “added value” to understanding or at least give this impression in a GCSE.

Incidentally, such Information Communications Technology (ICT) is valuable as a research tool for the gifted, but in the School’s RE area computers are simply not available and such is limited to homework among those with computers.

Once the pupils are spotted, there is delivery. Delivery is about interpretation, analysis, argument, speculation, evaluation, understanding, making thoughtful connections, empathy, imagination and reflection (QCA, 2002b). Again, RE favours these methods by the nature of its material. To this might be added History, as a process of interpretation, or Human Geography, or indeed English itself in its creativity. Insight also exists with numbers as with those who can “see” spreadsheets, complex graphs and equations.

The question is how to teach the gifted. Policy options for the comprehensive school include enrichment, acceleration and partial or whole segregation.

Enrichment means doing more that gives added value over and above the standard curriculum. It may be repetitive, or simply prevent idleness (Laycock, 1979, 135) that would have happened otherwise, but it still should be of benefit. The highly able student then takes all examinations at the same time as others, but has done more towards them and has a greater range of tools for achieving consistent A* grades. Enrichment involves self-study, or small group work with comparable peers, the use of libraries and resource rooms and ICT, and drawing on community resources (from Vernon, Adamson, Vernon, 1977, 142). Most teachers are said to prefer enrichment (Laycock, 1979, 134), although in the School this would mean mainly outside ordinary lessons. Such happens outside with *Excellence in Cities* but inside is where the challenge exists. For RE it would mean small group work challenges, some cognitive levels conflict, and introduction of abstractive commentary. A

class divided into pairs attempted Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) on multi-faith hymns on Year 9 Religious Pluralism but there was insufficient variety of outcome in the plenary (Appendix 4). Nevertheless this is a depth activity for gifted pupils.

The aim is to keep the gifted from cruising, so that they are busy and stretched. This means constructive engagement and able to share with people around them (Laycock, 1979, 136). It means at best in class differentiation, perhaps by grouping the brightest together. One can see, however, five different worksheet levels per classroom: the very weak SEN, the slow, the around the average, the clever and the gifted. The range is so vast that many a teacher would spend hours in preparation predicting start and finishing points for tasks.

Enrichment does demand much of a teacher and may need specialist help. Just as SEN pupils have teacher support, so classrooms could have support for the gifted. This would mean a specialist able to assist with additional work of challenge perhaps in a setting of paired or group work.

Nevertheless an enrichment policy comes with huge difficulties. External additional work, like after hours, is what happens with punishment. Extra tasks are often not enriching at all, like doing extra reading on the same level. Sometimes the child who finishes early is asked to look at something else which everyone is going to do shortly anyway. Enrichment can fall into good intentions over good execution (Laycock, 1979, 137).

Acceleration may be preferred. It breaks down into grade skipping, grade telescoping, continuous progress, courses brought forward and advanced placement (see Vernon, Adamson, Vernon, 1977, 142). The least impact, bureaucratically, is to skip a year, but grade skipping creates a problem of missing work (1977, 142). One person in the School has done this (Interview, 2002). Grade telescoping does not involve a loss of continuity (Vernon, Adamson, Vernon, 1977, 146) but is a situation where a class takes less time to carry through the curriculum. Non-grading involves blocks of work completed at the pace of the student. This could encompass all abilities but would be the most challenging bureaucratically, as students would become very divergent in speed of outcomes. It certainly favours open plan layouts, student centred learning and ICT, and requires considerable cost, probably with much teacher facilitation and ultimately as many learning objectives as there are students (from 1977, 148-149). Examination timings would be an individualist nightmare, and so several of these approaches usually revert back to grade organisation anyway (1977, 148).

Acceleration only really works if it is continuous with early University entrance. This still is unsatisfactory as many first year degree courses start with little more than reruns of A level type material, and increasingly give attention towards creating a study base literacy and numeracy. An alternative is to bring university level work into the school with a shorter university course afterwards, but this needs cross institutional co-ordination and agreement. *Excellence in Cities* is an attempt at introducing co-ordination.

One form of segregation within is across the board, and is likely to create rivalries and labelling, although children may be happier working alongside those like themselves (Vernon, Adamson, Vernon, 1977, 153). Such streaming is as much for the convenience of the teacher as for the benefit of the pupil (1977, 162) but may produce frustration with different aptitudes in different subjects. This still leaves the difficulty whether the highly able would be a top clique in a top stream or have to be in a separate class.

A more flexible alternative and with less discrimination (1977, 167) is to stream by subject, which may vary. The School itself first segregates in the Lower School for Maths, and extends this in later years for Modern Foreign Languages, Science and English. Again it is easier for teachers as well as providing expectation for the pupils. It needs to be flexible so that pupils will transfer downwards if they do not keep up, or have the chance to move upwards if they so develop. To facilitate always available transferring, the classes have to enrich rather than accelerate.

Indeed segregation does not take away the dilemma of whether to accelerate or enrich. The temptation is to accelerate. Only if the gifted are clearly different from all other streams can they accelerate and they would need to be segregated.

There is part time segregation. It is a costly approach which requires special provision, perhaps for half days or more (1972, 167). Segregation might be for

a period with the aim of returning to normal classes. The School does this for the behaviourally and educationally challenged. The Unit is a comfortable place, with few tables, its own ICT equipment (on which, during observations, great fluency by pupils has been shown), and the handful of pupils know each other. So there is an incentive for normal classroom disruption as it results in labelling, inclusion in the programme of the Unit, if via periods in isolation. This would be a concern if the gifted were to have their Unit too. Still, it could be a place of extraordinary learning with ICT facilities at hand and small groups of on task students. The best work could be done, where teachers sure in their subjects could set very challenging tasks. It need not be by age but by enquiry (Leyden, 1985, 73).

Just as subject teachers do object to planning one lesson for one use in the week among the very less able, they may also object to a one plan one use lesson amongst the more able. However, to produce one lesson and have nothing but difficulty with less able pupils is one thing, whereas to plan one lesson and find pupils making strong outcomes from it must be another. Children of different ages could gather to shine with creativity with their investigative group work. Teachers, however, might find such segregation challenging to their own subject knowledge and confidence. This is because such pupils need to see the teacher as a capable specialist for them to have confidence.

Although a Unit of the gifted would present the same behavioural challenge in ordinary classrooms as a Unit for SEN does, where, outside the area of

comfortable and well resourced provision, gifted pupils might become bored and disruptive, or be labelled, it could still be of great educational benefit. Perhaps it would expose the gifted students' true feelings in classrooms and might be a catalyst for change.

The alternative, of course, is to develop separate schools altogether, rather as there have been separate specialist schools for Special Educational Needs. It would be an elite system to put people towards elite universities. This is the paradox: some elitism within or without is required to teach gifted and talented pupils to their potential in order to address what is properly seen as an equal opportunities issue (The School, 2002, 1).

It is possible that comprehensive schools specialising in subjects may attract gifted pupils to attend where their greatest speciality is best resourced. This would adapt, or replace, the collaborative basis of external programmes. It is quite possible, if unlikely (if only because of new faith schools, which is a different concept), to have an RE specialist school, with links to Religious Studies at universities, producing models of best practice for other schools in the locality as well as collaborative work using co-ordinators and subject teachers.

In conclusion, cognitively advanced pupils called "gifted" present particular challenges to schools. External models of advancement have been offered such as *Excellence in Cities* but it is unclear if schools are integrating its experiences within, or if these are used avoid greater differentiation within

ordinary classes. Boredom is a danger as is underachievement. Training to teach has offered me only basic identification and experimentation with possible gifted pupils, but it is an interest perhaps to be pursued. Clear confident teacher subject knowledge and perhaps the risk of some flexible segregation is necessary within a school. Perhaps ultimately the comprehensive system is not capable of responding to this equal opportunities issue and some sort of modified elite system of specialist schools is required to maximise the education of the highly able.

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Appendix 1

Formally this discussion has yet to take place and will in 2003. An unplanned discussion with one Y7 Holy Week group on 16 December led to these questions being prepared for other groups yet was delayed by the last week before Christmas when normal lessons were suspended. The notes offer another account, but needs a lot of unpacking and words defined (which is done with objectives and other rote learning). The font is department recommended.

For the purposes of later discussion (write in your books)

The Resurrection

1. What do you think happened?

Was the "*risen Christ*"…

A transformed spiritual body?
The same physical body as was killed?
A ghost or some apparition?
Visions in some followers' minds?
A story written afterwards?
Something else?

2. Give reasons for your answer.

Notes:

Some argue that the Jesus movement was primarily about a rural group of Galileans who knew nothing but poverty and destitution. They healed and preached the very poor and destitute, and Jesus equipped his movement to serve others (symbolised by the washing of the disciples feet – lead by serving). When Jesus went to Jerusalem he was horrified about the wealth shown, and for disturbing the powers that be he was crucified. Some say the resurrection after his death is just the continuation of the healing and preaching of the Jesus movement who lost their nerve but not their faith, still expecting the coming Kingdom. They had visions as do people in stress and bereavement, but the main thrust was a movement which was getting on with the healing and preaching the Kingdom. But others say something unique happened in the resurrection.

Appenidix 2

This was an experiment in homework differentiation for Year 9 RE Social Harmony given on 24 October 2002 when teaching one group at a time of observation elsewhere.

When in London Gandhi read Thoreau. Using the Internet, analyse the connections you can see between Henry David Thoreau's *Civil* Disobedience and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's Ahimsa and Satyagraha.

http://www.kamat.com/mmgandhi/gandhi.htm
http://www.tipiglen.dircon.co.uk/thoreau.html
http://www.hutch.demon.co.uk/prom/civildisob.htm
http://www.grailquest.com/quotes.html
http://www.san.beck.org/GPJ16-Abolitionists.html#5
http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Literature/Thoreau/CivilDisobedience.html

"It was not Hinduism but Jainism which promoted Ahimsa." Using these Internet links (and any others), discuss this statement with reference to Gandhi and the nature of Hindu belief.

http://www.jainworld.com/phil/ahimsa/ahimindex.htm
http://www.jainmeditation.org/pages/message.html
http://www.jainmeditation.org/pages/background.html
http://www.wizard.net/~ethan/Source-Of-Peace.htm

"Ahimsa is not just a strategy for political resistance, it is for attitudes to animals too." Discuss this with reference to Hindu belief and any one other religion.

http://www.ivu.org/people/writers/linzey.html
http://www.ivu.org/news/1-96/linzey.html

Appendix 3

Most of this lesson is not aimed at raising the level, but textual content is there for higher level work. However, the last question, an exercise in genre writing and art work, can produce signs of gifted and talented (especially talented) processes.

Id-ul-Fitr/ Eid-ul-Fitr dates		
5/12/2002	25/11/2003	14/11/2004
Thursday	Tuesday	Sunday
1423	1424	1425

Lunar months are shorter than solar months. The Common Era (CE) and Before the Common Era (BCE) calendar is solar whereas the Islamic calendar is lunar. Hinduism has lunar months too. Thus Islamic months arrive more quickly than Solar months, and move back along the year each year.

Id-ul-Fitr is also known as Id-ul-Saghir - the Lesser Id - and Sheker Bayram (Turkish) - sugar feast. This is a celebration that ends the Ramadan fast. Id-ul-Fitr comes on the first day of the lunar month of Shawwal, the tenth Islamic month. A beautiful moon comes out.

Muhammad (Salla-llahu alaihi wa sallam/ Peace be upon him) said, "For every people there is a feast and this is our feast." (al-Bukhari)

Id-ul-Fitr is thanksgiving. Id means a recurring event. It is believed to be an immediate reward by Allah for those who spent Ramadan fasting and in worship. There can be six (voluntary) fasts after Id-ul-Fitr but fasting forbidden on this day.

Salat (prayer) at Id-ul-Fitr is part of the Muslims' road to Paradise. This is their day to seek forgiveness for sins. Muslims celebrate but should not spend too much money. People also send Id cards and say Id Mubarak - Happy Id. They decorate their houses with brightly coloured lights. Muslim women decorate their hands and feet with intricate patterns. People wash well, put on best clothes, make up and perfumes. The Id prayer in a mosque, park or special area can be performed any time between sunrise and noon, but is delayed for giving out zakat. Khutbah (sermon) is not compulsory and follows the Id prayer. It's best to go to the mosque one way and come back another.

Muslims visit friends and extended family giving sweets and money to the children. Special foods are cooked. Sweet foods are often served to suggest that life is sweet. In some countries there are special fairs, parades or camel-racing.

Questions:

Why does the Islamic calendar move faster than the calendar marking the common era?

On what date of which Islamic month does Id-ul-Fitr fall and when is it this year in the solar calendar?

What month does Id-ul-Fitr follow and what happened in that month?

What activities do Muslims do at Id-ul-Fitr in order to celebrate?

What alternative names are there for Id-ul-Fitr?

Later…

Make a card to send to friends. Include a greeting and some textual and/ or graphic design that includes a word or two expressing celebration. Remember that no images of people or animals should go on to the card.

Appendix 4

The following shows just six of thirteen hymns that went to pairs of pupils for DARTs exercises to examine religious pluralism. Other texts included the Golden Thread, which is the ethical core shared in may religious traditions, as shown below. These texts are potentially complex and would suit gifted pupils. The questions included are they multi-faith, how many faiths are mentioned, are they religious pluralist, and what are the main themes.

126 *Hymns for Living* The Larger View STENKA RAZIN 87. 87. D. Traditional Russian Melody, Arr. David Dawson Used by permission In their ancient isolation Races framed their moral codes, And the peoples of each nation Trod their solitary roads. Now the distances are shrinking; Travel, and the printed page, All earth's many lands are linking, Spreading knowledge of each sage. Now new times demand new measures, And new ways we must explore; Let each faith bring its own treasures To enrich the common store. Then no more will creeds divide us- Though we love our own the best- For the larger view will guide us As we join in common quest. John Andrew Storey	127 *Hymns for Living* Gather Us In WOODLANDS 10 10. 10 10. Walter Greatorex, 1877-1949 From Enlarged Songs of Praise, Oxford University Press Gather us in, thou Love that fillest all: Gather the rival faiths within thy fold; Throughout the nations, sound the clarion call: Beneath Love's banner all shall be enrolled! Gather us in, we worship only thee; In varied names we stretch a common hand; In diverse forms a common soul we see; In many ships we seek one promised land. Thine is the mystic life great India craves: Thine is the Parsee' s sin-destroying beam; Thine is the Buddhist's rest from tossing waves; Thine is the empire of vast China's dream. Thine is the Roman's strength without the pride; Thine is the Greek's glad world without its graves; Thine is the Law that is the Jew's life-guide; Thine is the Christian's faith, the grace that saves. Gather us in, thou Love that fillest all; Gather thy rival faiths within thy fold; Throughout the nations, sound the clarion call: Beneath Love's banner all shall be enrolled! after George Matheson, 1842-1906

128 *Hymns for Living*
Heritage

BRESLAU L M.
Melody in As Hymnodus Sacer, Leipzig (1625) Har. Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, 1809-47

The art, the science, and the lore
Of those through ages long since dust,
Their hard-won wisdom, slowly grown,
Come down to us a sacred trust.

From Sinai and from Bethlehem,
From China, India, Greece and Rome,
Their music, symbols, songs and prayers
Enrich and beautify our home.

The golden splendour of the sun,
The beauty of the living earth,
The far-flung galaxies of stars,
The need to love, attend our birth;

And all the hopes and prophecies
Of freedom, peace, the coming day
Of life more deeply, grandly lived,
Shine luminous upon our way.

Ours for the present, to increase,
Ours for the future and its care,
A heritage of growing light,
To live, transmit, and greatly share.

Jacob Trapp

129 *Hymns for Living*
It Sounds Along the Ages

FAR OFF LANDS 76. 76. D.
Melody of the Bohemian Brethren, Hemlandssanger, Rock Island, Illinois, 1892

It sounds along the ages,
Soul answering to soul;
It kindles on the pages
Of every Bible scroll;
The psalmist heard and sang it,
From martyr lips it broke,
The prophet tongues out-rang it
Till sleeping nations woke.

From Sinai's cliffs it echoed,
It breathed from Buddha's tree,
It charmed in Athens' market,
It hallowed Galilee;
The hammer stroke of Luther,
The Pilgrims' seaside prayer,
The testament of Torda
One holy word declare.

It calls-and lo, new justice!
It speaks-and lo, new truth!
In ever nobler stature
And unexhausted youth.
Forever on resounding,
And knowing nought of time,
Our laws but catch the music
Of its eternal chime.

from William Channing Gannett, 1840-1923

130 *Hymns for Living*
All Faiths

DANBYLM.
English Traditional Melody
coll. and arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958
From the English Hymnal

Our faith is but a single gem
Upon a rosary of beads;
The thread of truth which runs through them
Supports our varied human needs.

Confucian wisdom, Christian care,
The Buddhist way of self-control,
The Muslim's daily call to prayer
Are proven pathways to the goal.

From many lips, in every age,
The truth eternal is proclaimed,
By Western saint, and Eastern sage,
And all the good, however named.

Beside the noblest of our race
Our lives as yet cannot compare:
May we at length their truth embrace
And in their sacred mission share.

John Andrew Storey

131 *Hymns for Living*
All Earth's Children

LONDON (ADDISON'S) L.M.D.
John Sheeles, c. 1720
(shortened version)

For all the paths which guide our ways
We lift our hearts in joyful praise.
For Akhenaton, by whose hand
New light was brought to Egypt's land:
For Moses, and Judaic seers,
And every Hebrew psalm which cheers,
For Jesus Christ of lowly birth,
Who sought to found God's reign on earth:

For Hindu's varied paths to God
Which many noble souls have trod:
For Buddha's path, which, like the Jain,
Has shown the way to conquer pain:
For Guru Nanak, Punjab's son,
And all that noble Sikhs have done:
For Japanese and Chinese lore,
Confucian wisdom, Shinto awe:

For Zarathustra, Parsi sage,
The fount of Persia's golden age:
For Islam's Prophet, who by grace
Transformed a wayward desert race:
For Stoic souls of Rome and Greece,
Whose fame on earth shall never cease,
For all great souls, with common voice,
Let all earth's children now rejoice!

John Andrew Storey

THE GOLDEN THREAD

Bahai (H)	Regard not that which benefits yourself, but hold to that which benefits mankind.
Buddhist (C)	Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.
Christian (H)	Whosoever ye would that men should do to you, do even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Hindu (C)	Do not do to others what you would not like yourself.
Islamic (H)	No man is a true believer unless he desireth for his brother that which he desireth for himself.
Jain (C)	A man of religion should treat all beings as he himself would be treated.
Sikh (C)	As thou deemest thyself, so deem others. Then shalt thou become a partner in heaven.
Tao (C)	Regard your neighbour's gain as your own gain, and your neighbour's loss as your own loss.
Zoroastrian (H)	That nature is only good that does not do unto another whatever is not good for its own self.

(H) religions: historical, with intervention by God, by a prophet or incarnation, the human history it portrays usually having a beginning point and an end (last days, resurrection). These religions are Near Eastern/Persian in origin and shaped the West, leading to ideas of science as historical progress but ultimately challenged by them. More prone to dogma, exclusivity, contest. More lately science and religion both challenged for realism. Magic elements of historical religions tend towards some cyclical flavour.

(C) religions: cyclical, usually mythical (at least at the popular magical level), founders or no founders, with usually some form of Samsara (the endlessness of suffering human living with rebirth), Karma (the building up of life merit including through reincarnation) and an end to rebirth (the Atman joining Brahman in Hinduism or Nirvana in Buddhism). These religions are Indian and Eastern in origin. Also most myths and Pagan home religions are cyclical. These religions tend to flow together, distinct but more easily co-operative and less exclusive. Also, with higher rational forms, and with mythical story like forms, tend to run with modern challenges to realism and concrete truth (except for given beliefs in reincarnation).

Religions share transcendent (God/s/ess/es, Nirvana), word (prophet, book), way (moral codes), communion (worship, meditation), healing/ salvation.