



## Learning through sharing

Case studies written by schools for schools

Name:	Burleigh Community College
Title:	Developing a whole-school approach to provision for Gifted and Talented students
Context:	Maintained comprehensive, 14-18 upper school in Loughborough



“ The students who have participated have been highly motivated and inspired and the opportunities that have been provided have allowed them to grow: minds have been stretched and boundaries broadened. ”

Headteacher, Burleigh Community College

encouraging  
action leadership  
achievement  
innovation  
development

## School context

Comprehensive, 14-18 upper school

Based in Loughborough, Leicestershire

1,250 pupils

23% ethnic minority families

25% students have English as a second language

9.8% students have Special Educational needs

11% students eligible to claim free school meals

School facilities include a small boarding house

“ Elite sporting students have seen tremendous benefits from an integrated approach and they have instilled enthusiasm and creativity across the peer group. ”

Headteacher, Burleigh Community College

### Target group

160 Gifted and Talented (G&T) students from across the four year groups. These consist of:

- 100 academically able students of whom 58% are girls and 42% are boys;
- 60 gifted and talented sportspeople, of whom 6 were also on the academic register and 46% are girls and 55% boys; and,
- 10 elite athletes, of whom 80% were girls and 20% were boys.

### Why this project?

The rationale for the development and the identification of need were:

- We wanted to provide a programme of support for students who are gifted and talented in different areas.
- There is a nationally identified requirement to extend the provision for students with special needs at the 'elite' end of the academic scale to ensure they fulfil their potential. Similarly, there is a need to ensure that students with large time commitments to county or district squads maintain academic achievement and have a balanced lifestyle. Burleigh also has a commitment to support young people performing sport at national and international levels.

### The starting point

- We created the post of 'G & T co-ordinator' to work closely with senior management and subject departments for the benefit of both academically and sportingly able students.
- The Loughborough Sport Education Consortium identified the need to educate and care for young sportspeople training in university facilities with elite squads. It was decided to set up a system whereby students could train at the University, be educated at Burleigh and live in the school boarding house.

### Aims

We wanted to achieve the following:

- A whole-school approach to G & T provision for students identified as academically and/or sportingly gifted and talented.
- To support gifted and talented sports students in particular by helping them to balance the sporting, academic and social elements in their lives.

“It’s nice to be **recognised** for being good and to know that **all the hard work** has **paid off**”

A pupil at Burleigh Community College

## Action

In 2002/03 we developed the criteria below to help target G & T students:

- **Academic:** students with an average score of 6.7 or more and an average YELLIS score of 70. Those with either, but not both, formed a secondary list.
- **Sporting:** students performing at or above county level (or equivalent).
- **Elite sport:** students on elite training programmes at Loughborough University.

We then devised programmes for each group as follows:

### For academically able students:

- A mentoring programme in which students attend one-to-one meetings with staff volunteer mentors once every half term. Staff are also available to students outside of these meetings if they have an issue they want to discuss. The students have a Progress Review Form that is filled in by all of their teachers prior to these meetings. Each mentor is given a supporting pack of information to help them.
- Students are taught to ‘speed read’ in order to give students a better understanding of how we read and how to use their brain at higher level. This programme involves students attending five sessions during curriculum time, eight during tutor time and a training day at Loughborough University delivered by Anne Jones, the World Speed Reading Champion, who is now an external consultant. The students also study ‘Learning Theory’, including work on learning style, memory work and study skills.
- Celebratory events have been created to generate an atmosphere of success and an acceptance of academic achievement. An example is the ‘Achievement Afternoon’ where the whole college attends an award presentation for Years 11, 12 and 13.

### For sportingly able students

- Students have attended Junior Athlete Education (JAE) workshops as well as a nutrition workshop run by the British Olympic Association.
- An annual ‘Sports Awards’ evening celebrates both success and participation in sport in the company of a guest presenter, parents, governors, staff and students.

### For elite sportspeople

- Through liaison with national governing bodies and staff at Loughborough University we hold regular reviews to ensure that a co-ordinated and comprehensive education is provided for these students which does not conflict with their sporting commitments.

## Results

These are the main achievements and impacts:

- The subject Specialism of Physical Education has led the way in the support of G & T students by applying the principles of the JAE programme, of workshops and mentoring, in a whole-school context.
- The culture and ethos in the school is slowly changing to one where being a G & T student is not only accepted but a cause for pride and there is competition to achieve a place on the register.
- 58% of the increasing number of students who come to us from outside the normal catchment area say they came to Burleigh because of the sporting provision offered.
- A flexible approach to timetabling helps to support the elite athletes’ individual needs. Further, living in the boarding house allows elite sports students to access academic, pastoral and sporting expertise whenever they need it in their very busy schedules of training for national and international performance.
- The individual progress of each student is monitored by the Director of Sport at the Sports College. And, so far,
  - the nine students who have passed through the elite sport G & T system have all achieved well in their academic exams;
  - the sporting G & T students have seen improvements in their performance, particularly in basketball;
  - in 2003, 23% of academically G & T students achieved their predicted GCSE scores while 28% achieved better grades than predicted; and,
  - all departmental awards for excellence in ‘effort’ went to students on the G & T register.
- Sports Academies for netball, basketball and girls’ football have been set up and are proving both popular and successful. The academies are run before and/or after school and in the evenings and are open to students from partner schools and colleges. Further, a one-day basketball excellence course was run for elite Year 10 basketball players from schools across the county.

More students are developing a growing interest in what further and higher education has to offer as a result of working in partnership with Loughborough and from visits to other universities.

Learning Support Assistants are becoming mentors, giving us an innovative approach to the use of AOTTS in addressing workforce reform priorities. Further, a G & T co-ordinator for partner schools in Loughborough has been employed.

# challenges

## Further challenges

Now we would like to achieve the following:

- Review the selection criteria and develop a more sophisticated system, which would make sure we include a certain number of SEN or ethnic minority students. To this end, the head of 'English as an Additional Language' at Burleigh has been trained to identify gifted students whose poor English may prevent them from being identified as gifted or talented.
- Better liaison with the feeder schools allowing us to identify students who are at risk of social exclusion in order to support them more effectively with regard to G & T once at Burleigh.
- More effective publicity for the programme in order to attract more academically able students to the college.
- Explore the possibility of extending the boarding house in order to accommodate more elite athlete students.
- Co-ordinate with other G & T work within the school and complete the departmental review of provision for G & T students in each subject area and work with subject leaders to set up an appropriate programme within each department. Ultimately, we aim to ensure provision for G & T students by every teacher in every subject.
- Closer monitoring of students to ensure they achieve as hoped, including the aim of the top 25 achieving students at GCSE in the year group coming from the G & T list. In addition, closer scrutiny of the data on attainment of G & T students to see if there are any subjects where they are under-achieving.

- Improve links with clubs and governing bodies and establish Academies of Sport for new sports in order to extend those students at county level.
- Arrange more 'events/activities' for the students on the register, including visits outside of college, to help them develop the skills they require in order to improve their academic work.
- Organising a session on 'Helping G & T students' at the annual Year 10 parents' 'Help your child through GCSEs evening'. Also, holding group meetings for parents of students on the G & T register.

## Sharing and celebrating success

- We plan to use the 'Building Bridges' project to promote, disseminate and extend this whole-school approach to G & T provision with partner schools by employing a G & T co-ordinator for Loughborough.

## Maintaining progress

We aim to ensure sustainability and development of improved standards by:

- Enlisting more staff and training them appropriately; and,
- Continuing with our rigorous monitoring and evaluation system in which students, staff and parents now have a voice.

# success