



Amaroo School's Gifted and Talented Program



The Apollo ProgrAM is Amaroo School's Gifted and Talented Program and is available to students from Kindergarten through to Year 10.

The name of our program represents the ancient Greek God Apollo, the God of Light and Learning, and therefore, represents literature and the humanities. It also represents the sciences and mathematics, as the name Apollo is associated with the first successful lunar landing. These learning areas represent our program's academic focus on English, humanities, languages, sciences and mathematics.

The ACT Education Directorate's Gifted and Talented Policy aims to ensure gifted and talented students receive developmentally appropriate provisions and strategies. Research over the past 30 years has indicated that it is important for gifted learners to have the opportunity to work with other students who think like them (Benbow 1991, 1998; Feldhusen and Moon, 1992; Kulik & Kulik, 1992; Rogers, 1991, 2007). Rogers (2019) and Van Tassel-Baska support this research indicating that when gifted students experience ability grouping, they experience substantial academic gains and improvements in attitude and motivation. The Apollo ProgrAM aims to address these findings through strategic class placements (clustering of like-minded peers) and differentiation of the curriculum and instruction.

Our program identifies students through a range of objective and subjective measures which inform our judgement about the most appropriate placements that maximise students' learning. Objective measures include the use of an official screening test, but data is also triangulated with PATS-Reading/PATS-Numeracy assessments and the students' most recent NAPLAN results. We place students in the Apollo Program if they are performing at Stanine 9 (well-above average) or Stanine 8 (above average).

Subjective measures include teacher judgement around the following indicators:

Consistent indicators of giftedness

- **"Good" thinking** – e.g. reasoning, conceptual understanding, abstract thinking, problem solving, generalising;
- **Ease or speed of learning** – may learn from being told/shown just once; quick to see errors as learning opportunities;
- **Advanced verbal abilities** – early/sophisticated expressive language development, sophisticated vocabulary and/or complex sentences (although some gifted children actually begin to talk later than usual, then progress swiftly); advanced receptive language that can be observed (advanced ability to comprehend concepts, vocabulary, directions and questions);
- **Exceptional memory** – e.g. can retain information after brief exposure; able to recall early life events in complete detail; Exceptional concentration or attention span – a long attention span when interested; children in the upper levels of giftedness may be able to concentrate on more than one thing at a time;
- **Perseverance or motivation** – e.g. greater goal-directedness and persistence to completion, an appetite for learning;
- **Wide ranging interests and knowledge** – interests may be intense and outside what is expected for young children;
- **Preference for older companions** – prefer older children/adults to age peers, which may reflect advanced language levels, preferences for complexity in play, mature views of friendships;
- **Keen observation** – an eye for detail; notes subtle changes;
- **Quantitative ability and interests** – interest and skill in numbers; greater interest in time, calculators, money;
- **Exceptional spatial ability** – interest and skill in puzzles, maps, diagrams; advanced sense of place and direction;
- **Early use of symbolic representation** – early or sophisticated drawing or writing (depends on fine motor development).

Possible indicators of giftedness

- **Early development** – e.g. begins to sit and walk earlier than other children; begins to speak, read, write or use numbers earlier than other children;
- **Intense curiosity** – shows intense curiosity/deeper knowledge than other children; e.g. insatiable need to know/explore;
- **Wide range of temperaments** – e.g. perfectionism (concern with precision, especially in area of interest), sensitivity (easily hurt, empathetic), intensity, concern with moral or social issues;
- **Often exhibits imagination and creativity** – e.g. finds imaginative ways to get out of doing things they don't want to do;
- **Has an advanced sense of humour** – is humorous in speech, social interactions, art or story telling; makes jokes, puns, or plays on words.

Child characteristics that can mask giftedness

- **Problematic behaviour** – disruptiveness, stubbornness, lack of cooperation, refusal, questioning of authority;
- **Introversion** – shy and hesitant children can be underestimated; introversion is more common in a gifted population;
- **Uneven development** – it is common for gifted children to be more advanced in one area than another;
- **Learning difficulty** – can result in the giftedness and learning difficulty masking each other so that the child appears average;
- **Physical or sensory disability** – may result in fixation on disability and failure to recognise strengths;
- **Hiding ability** – to gain acceptance, to meet teacher expectations, or to avoid failure or perceived adult demands.

Family characteristics that can mask giftedness

- **Economic disadvantage** – potential may be hidden without experiences to reveal it;
- **Minority language/bilingualism** – proficiency in a language may be greater than the language of the educational setting;
- **Cultural customs** – e.g. drawing attention to self; approaches to thinking; views of what giftedness is;
- **Gifted siblings** – if one child has been identified as gifted, siblings may not be recognised if different in skills, interests etc.

Students identified for our program will be grouped according to giftedness as well as giftedness and talent (see below for definitions). This is important because we recognise that some students are gifted but do not necessarily demonstrate their talents. Consequently:

- Students identified through external tests and teacher identification in K-2 are clustered with like-minded peers;
- Primary classes, from Year 3 - Year 6, will be grouped according to giftedness or giftedness and talent in one class or in clusters across mainstream classes;
- Subject acceleration and year level acceleration are rare, however, in some instances, the school may suggest this as an option to cater for the needs of an individual student. This *may* also be used as a strategy instead of clustering the student with like-minded peers. Students in this situation will have a targeted Individual Learning Plan (ILP);
- Students in Year 7 onwards, who are identified for our program, will be clustered, for giftedness or giftedness and talent, in either:
 - o English and humanities classes
 - o Mathematics and science classes
 - o Or, alternatively, in English, humanities, mathematics *and* science classes.
 - o Occasionally students are placed in a single Apollo cluster (e.g. Apollo English only)

These groupings will depend upon numbers of students reliably identified through our identification process. It is important to note that students identified through our process will remain in our Apollo ProgrAM, which aims to develop the whole child, in their time at Amaroo School.

Teachers of Apollo students at Amaroo meet twice per term (Week 5 and Week 10) to reflect on their teaching practice, interrogate the data and share teaching strategies for the differentiation for gifted and talented students.

For further information about this topic we encourage you to consult [The ACT Education Directorate's Gifted and Talented Students](#) page on their website.

Definitions:

Giftedness designates the possession and use of outstanding natural abilities, called aptitudes, in at least one ability domain to a degree that places an individual among the 10% of age peers (Gagne, 2016).

Talent designates the outstanding mastery of systematically developed abilities, called competencies (knowledge and skills), in at least one field of human activity to a degree that places an individual at least among the top 10% of age peers who are, or have been, active in that field (Gagne, 2016).

Parent Fact Sheets

[Giftedness refers to a student's outstanding natural abilities or aptitudes](#)

[Myths and Facts](#)

[Social-emotional needs](#)

[Education and Training Directorate](#)

[GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION - Identification](#)

[GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION DUAL EXCEPTIONALITY PARENT FACTSHEET](#)

[GROUPING](#)

[GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION](#)

[Whole grade acceleration](#)

[Communicating effectively with schools about meeting the specific learning needs](#)

Articles for the Education Community

[How does the debate on learning preferences influence how we plan curriculum for gifted learners?](#)

[Quality Assessment for Gifted Learners](#)

[Understanding the different curriculum needs of gifted learners](#)

[Understanding the Gifted Learners in our Classrooms](#)

[Who are our twice-exceptional learners?](#)

Timeline for testing and information sharing

	Amaroo Primary <i>Kindergarten- Year 6</i>	Amaroo Secondary <i>Year 7 - Year 10</i>	External Students <i>Year 6 only</i>
Term 1		Week 5 - New students tested	
Term 2		Week 5 - New students tested	
Term 3	Weeks 3/4 - All Year 2 and Year 6 tested Week 5 - New students tested (Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5)	Week 5 - New students tested	Week 6 - All students in Year 6 who are enrolled for the following year are offered testing
Term 4	Week 5-7 - Classes are compiled Week 8 - Offers of Apollo placement emailed to families	Week 5 - New students tested Week 5-7 Classes are compiled Week 8- Offers of Apollo placement emailed to families	Weeks 6 to 9 - Offers of Apollo placement emailed to families

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