Gifted Education at Resurrection

Background.

In June 2012, the Education and Training Committee of the Parliament of Victoria released the report, *Inquiry into the Education of Gifted and Talented Students* (the Inquiry). The Inquiry examined gifted and talented education in early childhood settings, primary and secondary schools, drawing on evidence relating to the government, Catholic and independent sectors. It involved extensive engagement with educators, the families of gifted and talented children and young people, experts and other stakeholders and made 65 recommendations on how the education of gifted and talented learners could be improved.

In December 2012, the Victorian Government released its response to the Inquiry, supporting 63 of its 65 recommendations. The Government’s commitment to a comprehensive policy response was confirmed with the release of the directions paper, *New Opportunities for the Gifted and Talented* in April 2013.


The Catholic Education Office, Melbourne, also released a resource guide for teachers in Catholic schools, indicating in this that “Catholic Schools strive to develop, and indeed seek out the potential of each student. This occurs in the context of each student’s holistic development: spiritual, moral, social, emotional, physical and intellectual, across every domain of learning.”

Our Direction.

Whilst the Inquiry and recommendations were being formulated, we at Resurrection were learning all we could about Gifted Education and who we may need to provide for differently within our classrooms.

The key points that have driven our direction in pursuing a higher level curriculum for these children have been:

- According to Gagne, 10 to 15 percent of the population is gifted.
- It is important that the term ‘gifted and talented’ is not used as a label. As with all children, every gifted and/or talented child is an individual, with a unique developmental and learning profile. To identify a child as gifted and/or talented is to recognise this individuality and respond appropriately.
- Gifted children can also have learning disabilities.
- High potential does not necessarily translate into high performance. The correct learning opportunities need to be targeted to the needs of individual children for this to happen.
- Recognition of high potential is essential for the long-term wellbeing of the gifted child. Some high potential children underachieve because they have not been challenged in the right way and they have “given up”. It is a justice issue that every child has the opportunity to learn at his own level.
Gifted children learn things quicker and tend to think more abstractly. This needs to be taken into account in their curriculum provision.

It is important for gifted children to be given the opportunity to work with “like minds”. At Resurrection, we provide this opportunity not only within our own school, but also in conjunction with three other schools who are also interested in providing for these children.

This year we have also embarked on a project in collaboration with the Catholic Education Office and another school, to examine, based on current theoretical knowledge, how we might best improve our teaching and learning practices to best cater for our highest achievers, and those with potential who may be underachieving.