

CORRECTED VERSION

EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the education of gifted and talented students

Glen Waverley — 15 August 2011

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Witnesses

Mr B. Cunningham, Principal, and
Ms C. Stavrou Martyn, Year 2 teacher, Camelot Rise Primary School.

The CHAIR — Thank you for inviting the Education and Training Committee to your school to have a look around this morning — we're certainly very impressed with the school and its facilities and the kids. Just to give you an introduction by way of how the committee will work today. The committee is looking at the specific area of gifted and talented and highly able students and so we're really looking at your experiences in teaching this particular cohort of students and the experiences that you have in your school. The evidence that we'll use today will form part of a report which we'll then produce and present to the Parliament looking at recommendations on how we can support this particular cohort of students. Any evidence today is protected as part of parliamentary privilege which is the same parliamentary privilege that we enjoy when we are in parliament. Any comments made outside of the actual hearing itself is not protected by the same privilege. Hansard is also recording today and you will be provided with a copy with the actual hearing transcript and if there are any typographical errors or anything that you would pick up then there is the opportunity to correct those as well. The committee has a number of questions that we will ask you and then give you the opportunity at the end to give any sort of concluding statement. If I could begin.

Firstly, in terms of awareness of your school, how do parents of gifted and talented students find out about Camelot Rise and the fact that it caters for gifted and talented students?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — The vast majority of families that enquire about enrolling here do mention word of mouth from other parents and also other groups but there are also groups such as CHIP, Children of High Intellectual Potential, and we have a wonderful working relationship with them. So there are groups like that that recommend Camelot Rise Primary School. Mainly word of mouth. There are some, and I'm not sure of the particular names, but there are also some psychologists that do testing when the parents want to have their child tested to see if they're highly able or gifted and through those there's a number of recommendations as well. We also get a lot of inquiries through our website. I think parents tend to Google "gifted and talented" and our school website is one that comes up. So there's a number of ways that the community — that the prospective families — contact the school or find out about the school.

The CHAIR — Just a quick breakdown of numbers. How many kids at the school?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — 390 children at the school. We have about 40% from outside the Glen Waverley postcode. As for the number of highly able or gifted children, we couldn't put a figure on that. It is not something that we specifically go around and identify particular children as being — "That child's gifted. That child's gifted. That child is highly able." We don't actually specifically identify in that regard and I don't know. It really would be a challenge pulling a number in.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — We have lots of highly able students in the classroom. Let's say a good 20%.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — It would be difficult. We also have approximately 70% of children across the school who would be performing above expected level.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — Definitely and I suppose we become so accustomed to that, that we consider these children who are performing above as just being our average kids.

The CHAIR — Seeing that obviously you've got a good reputation around this particular area, when was the policy first developed to actually go out and specifically target the group.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — Cris would have to answer this because I haven't been here that long.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — The school wrote its first gifted and talented students' policy in 1997. So that was quite early in the piece.

The CHAIR — What led to the writing of the policy?

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — Genuine interest in raising the profile of gifted education at our school, quite a few teachers were driving that and they were wanting to do a lot more for gifted students. Just the recognition of gifted students in the school community. Back then — just the understanding that gifted children needed to be catered for in a different way wasn't quite understood. So there was a lot of professional development required for teachers and for the community to come to that understanding. Not enough was done. It was early times and around about 1996, I think, was when the department brought about the Bright Futures policy and a lot more gifted education was brought to the surface. Our school was part of the Monash Network for Gifted Education and we met up with a lot of other schools and worked with providing programs for gifted and highly able students.

The CHAIR — When the Bright Futures program came in did you accelerate some of the program offerings and the promotion of what you were doing here? How did the policy affect you?

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — There was a lot of information in that policy. A lot of resources there. Identification of highly able and gifted students and underachieving students. That, with a lot of the gifted conferences that were around, were great resources to equip us with thinking about what sort of programs we could include within the school, tapping into the CHIP program as well, the experts from that group and inviting them to discuss what we could do at our school to improve...

Mr CUNNINGHAM — What's on offer.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — Yeah, for gifted students. So we came up with introducing the vertical structured maths program and basically that's like an extension program. There's compacting and acceleration that happens within that program and students are grouped, according to their ability level. This was highly successful. We introduced it in 1999 and it is still going really well and our results are very positive.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — The structure of the way that our program operates has varied over the years. Basically partly because of the increase in size of the school but currently the grade 3 and 4 children are mixed among the grades into different ability levels. So the child might be in Cris Martyn's class but when it comes to maths they might go into one of the other teachers and work with other children from that 3/4 area that have similar abilities. We do the same in 5/6.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — 1/2.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — A watered down version in the 1/2.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — You would have a high achieving group in each of those levels. With the 5/6s once a week we have the teachers from the CHIP program who would come and teach a class in that maths group. So that's an extra resource there.

The CHAIR — That developed from 1997 pretty much?

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — 1999 it was introduced.

The CHAIR — Your website refers to an action plan. Is it possible to get a copy of that action plan for our committee?

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — It's our approach. We have a whole school approach to catering for all students and gifted students but everyone's included in that and that is the way we differentiate our curriculum. Within that differentiated curriculum you are looking at rich open-ended tasks through all of the disciplines, the development of high-order thinking skills within the planning of curriculum areas, planning inquiry-based units, embedding the Bloom's Taxonomy. There's the vertical maths program which targets all students and helps to extend all students.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — We also have a range of extension programs. One we are working on currently

with regard to spelling is the school has had a spelling program that we have been following through but we found towards the higher levels the children needed something more challenging so we've introduced what we call our extension spelling program so once the children have finished the school program, which is based on smart words, then they start looking at in more detail Latin roots, Greek roots and more complex spelling strategies so that the children continue to develop but it's also challenging those that are very competent spellers. That's in its early stages at the moment but it certainly is proving a hit with the children. They like the opportunity to take on those extra challenges and the teachers are linking those activities to a lot of current affairs articles. So not only are they developing their spelling strategies and learning a lot more about the roots and bases of words but that is increasing their general knowledge about events happening in Australia and across the world.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — In reading programs so much is done in that particular area as well. At the moment my high ability groups are reading material that deals with themes and emotions and within that there's a lot of philosophical thinking and expression of their feelings and looking in depth. So there is that opportunity for the students. The Famous People Program, which is again literacy based, all children can tap into. They have a choice of completing a variety of different tasks that match their particular preferred learning style. Their input into the program will reflect their understanding.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — There is opportunity to research as deep as they need to go. So some of the children might only touch on the surface but those that want to go a lot further have the opportunity to go and delve a lot more into the history and experiences of that person and what made them noted. It can be, just might be something that someone discovered and they can talk about the fact that the Wright brothers invented the first aeroplane but those that want to go further can actually get into a lot more of the detail of that. So it gives them opportunity. Something else that also happens is that there is some cross age work done. For example, last year Cris and two of the other teachers that take the highly able groups at the different levels had them working together once a week for a period of about 10 weeks, I think. That was great because not only did the children get the opportunity to show their knowledge and their skills but they had to also be able to teach it and encourage others. So it wasn't just them knowing but making them explain what they had learnt. That certainly proved a challenge to some but, again, just that opportunity to extend them. With regard to the action plan that you refer to, that's a list of just a range of the different activities and programs that we offer.

The CHAIR — Are we able to get a copy of that?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — I think we should be able to organise that.

The CHAIR — Again the website refers to a number of ways in which gifted students are identified, including formal assessment, parent nomination, teacher observation and achievement tests. In your experience what is the most effective way to identify giftedness in students?

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — As a teacher myself I use a whole range of resources and they all help to give me a profile of that particular student. Experience helps quite a bit. You almost become intuitive of children and a lot of these children go off in tangents or have an amazing idea and a light bulb goes on. They have passion for particular interests and they know that particular subject in depth and they want to integrate all of the disciplines within this particular subject area. They ask, profound questions and think more broadly. Knowing the traits of gifted students, the characteristics, helps a lot.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — There is also the Krongold Centre, which is based at Monash University, and the Mensa Society, they do formal testing. We don't have any specific formal testing but it is more anecdotal — whether we see that a child is going to need that extra extension and extra things need to be done to cater for them.

The CHAIR — Is there any additional training for teachers in assisting with identification and supporting kids.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — There is a lot of material out there and it's just passing that on to the

teachers and talking about it and applying it within your classrooms. There is a lot of material out there with that that's accessible.

The CHAIR — Do you do any PD in a formalised manner?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — We have a couple of teachers, of which Cris is one and Katrina Van Vuuren — she was the third person who was going to be here today until the sports day got moved. They go to the Gifted and Talented Expo or professional development at the end of each year and they bring back information. A lot of what we do in the way of catering for the children is just a lot of hard work by the staff, making sure they have a range of activities and challenges that the children can achieve. It really is just an awful lot of hard work and dedication of the staff to cater for the children.

The CHAIR — You mentioned that the formalised research tools that the Krongold Centre and what have you offer, what sort of resources and support do you think teachers need in terms of helping to potentially identify kids that are of a gifted and able nature?

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — I have a whole lot of resources here. As I said, there is so much out there...

The CHAIR — Just an example.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — Finding the time to get through it.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — It's just unbelievable. Even the Bright Futures, what they had was absolutely amazing. Have you had a good look at their resources because it is just page upon page of different ways of identifying highly able, underachieving highly able and then the positive and the negative characteristics that they display. All these are from different sources and there's even forms that you can give to parents to respond to, "Do they show these traits?" et cetera. They can come to school — you can give them these forms and they can bring them back to school and you can have a look at those. That is extra input from home.

The CHAIR — Do you do that?

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — We did that initially at the school. That can be helpful. You know, there's student self assessments we can give to the children, certain questionnaires, and they can answer those and you can have a look at those as well and what teachers think. Teachers can discuss a particular child with a number of other teachers and get some input on that. It just goes on and on.

The CHAIR — Do you make any distinction between students who are gifted and children who are highly able and high achievers?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — When you say "do we"...

The CHAIR — So those that have high ability versus identified as through testing or charts as being specifically gifted? Or do you treat them all...

Mr CUNNINGHAM — We provide the opportunities for everyone and treat them all more or less the same. Any child that wants to be a part of things such as the tech club or chess club, children that want to be a part of Tournament of Minds, a range of things, we open it up to everyone. Depending on the numbers who are interested we might have a bit of a selection process involved but we don't...

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — Do you mean categories or exclude them? You just provide that differentiate curriculum for them to be able to spread as far as they wish and work with like-minded kids. So they've got that opportunity.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — No, we don't specifically identify them as gifted and highly able.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — As long as they are catered for...

Ms MILLER — You talked about teachers kind of overviewing students' growth throughout the primary school. So my question is how do Camelot teachers differentiate the curriculum for gifted students?

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — We plan together as a team and we look at all the important aspects required that are beneficial for the teaching and learning of gifted students, which I've mentioned, including the higher thinking skills...

Mr CUNNINGHAM — The higher order thinking skills using Bloom's Taxonomy, Gardner's as well.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — A lot of which is teaching learning experiences, investigative-type activities, inquiry-based programs.

Ms MILLER — So each child has, like, an individual action plan?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — No, no, all the children might be involved in a particular topic, for want of a better word, but the expectations that the teachers have on what might be achieved and the direction that they — the children take them can vary. So the children can take it as far as they want. Some need to be encouraged to go that extra step but by having a range of different topics as well that the children can work through. Having the small groups, as we do, for example, with number or with maths and also with literacy, the children working in small groups. So we start with the whole class activity, small groups, and then usually finish with the whole class. In the small group activities it will be targeted at their specific abilities. While we may all be doing capital letters what is expected of one group will be very different to the work that is given to another group. By the teachers rotating the groups around they are then able to cater for the different children.

Ms MILLER — You talked about the teachers getting together, is that done at the beginning of the year, monthly or...

Mr CUNNINGHAM — Weekly, fortnightly

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — We're talking about whole units for the whole term. We'll get together and plan those and try to include all of these aspects within the planning so that the children are catered for.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — Every term each level gets a day where they get to spend a whole day planning with each other to do the outline of the curriculum for the 10 weeks or however long the term is. But then there is also fortnightly and some levels meet weekly where they go down to the finer detail of, "What are we going to do in the next week?"

Ms MILLER — In those meetings, or somewhere in between, if you identify that a student is worthy of being accelerated to the next level is that something you have considered or would consider?

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — That should be allowed for within that planning, within that differentiation, if that child wants to go further there should be that opportunity for that child to be able to do that and in the maths program, there is that scope as well because they are placed where their understandings are at.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — That is where the planning comes into play for the teachers because the children are basically in their groups. What is the next stage for that group and then once they've got to that point it is just constantly looking at the VELs progression points and what is the next level to go through. Our highly able maths group in year 6, some 5/6 children would be working at some aspects of year 8 and 9 maths. Cris has got a group with the year 2s with some of the work she would be doing with some of those children would be at grade 3, 4 level or grade 5. It is a case of through a lot of testing, assessment and observation, knowing where the children need to go next.

Ms MILLER — In terms of setting criteria based on your experience, knowledge, resources, you kind of

informally set a criteria and it is based on an individual observation and progression for students' learning. Is that how you kind of...

Mr CUNNINGHAM — It would be through monitoring of the VELS progression points.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — There are independent tests as well and that gives us a little bit more information but working with them, I get to know them on a more one-to-one basis. As a teacher I get to know where their understanding of things are at and how much I can push them further ahead or that way they basically take it. You start off with a particular topic, developing that area, and then they take it where they want to take it. You allow for that. You give them that freedom and opportunity to do that.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — Under the guidance of the teacher to make sure they are staying on track as well.

Mr ELASMAR — Do you accept students from outside the school catchment area?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — We do.

Mr ELASMAR — If you do get some from outside does it mean there would be a large number of students? How do you select your children's entry? How do you do that?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — Basically if families want to come here we will take them. It is an issue all the time with the school growing in numbers but parents come along because they also have to come and visit the school to make sure it fits. You do get families that hear that a school — whether it be Camelot Rise or another school — is a great school but I also very much encourage the parents to come along and look at the school first.

Mr ELASMAR — If you have more numbers than the school can take how do you select the children?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — We haven't got to that point yet.

Mr ELASMAR — Do you have many come from travelling buses?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — We do have some that come by bus but the vast majority come by car or walk. But there are a couple of children that come by buses.

The CHAIR — In terms of particularly the kids that are coming from, say, outside the catchment area that might be identified as gifted or highly able, do you have a group of those that come from disadvantaged backgrounds, Indigenous?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — No.

The CHAIR — One of the things we had in terms of our submissions is many parents made submissions that say it is difficult for gifted children to gain early entry into primary school. Do you offer early entry into primary school?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — That's totally out of our hands. That's a department policy and schools can't make that decision themselves. The parents have to seek permission from the education department for early entry. So if a family inquires — we do have a number of those — I just direct them to the department. We don't have the power to make that decision.

The CHAIR — But you do have a number that go that extra step to make the...

Mr CUNNINGHAM — Not while I've been here no. In my time here I have probably had five or six inquiries about early entry. I have directed them to the education department and explained the process. Whether they have continued on through that process and not been successful I don't know but in my time here we haven't had any early entries. It's a very rare occurrence, I believe, that a child is allowed early

entry to the school.

The CHAIR — Leaving the department aside for a moment, what is your feeling about having some sort of policy that caters for early entry?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — I think it is a big decision to start early and I think there really does need to be an overruling governing body rather than the decision being made on an individual school basis. One of the conversations I had with families that are considering that is, “You may believe your child is ready for school now, they may be academically ready or socially ready but what you also have to consider is that in 13 years’ time when your child is turning 16 is he or she going to be mature enough to deal with the rigours of VCE or whatever it might be called in 13 years time?” That is sometimes an aspect where the parents go, “I haven’t thought of that.”

The CHAIR — At the other end do you have some students that actually leave to undertake high school earlier than...

Mr CUNNINGHAM — No. Again, the number of acceleration through primary years is extremely minimal. I think that’s something that tends to happen in secondary schools.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — They do seek high schools with acceleration programs.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — Box Hill, for example.

Mr ELASMAR — Many submissions have been put to the inquiry that Victorian teachers do not have sufficient knowledge or understanding of gifted education. What kind of qualification or training do teachers have at this school?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — There’s nothing — no extra official qualifications, no further studies. It’s really the teachers here are very dedicated and willing to do a lot of research and talk to people such as Cris, who is a wonderful resource, to help cater for those children and also working with the parents — we work closely with the parents to also find out where they see the child’s needs are but there aren’t any official qualifications that the teachers have.

Mr ELASMAR — Is there any training you think they should take before they start teaching?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — If there was something like that included in the pre-service training that would be excellent.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — There have been some short accreditation courses in the past on gifted education — Bright Sparks, I did Bright Sparks earlier on — but otherwise you do a Masters in Gifted Education I’d imagine. You would just have to attend the PDs, which some of them are fantastic.

Ms MILLER — Are the teachers encouraged to do it or is it just that it is a self-directed kind of thing? As a principal would you encourage your teachers to pursue this outside of their own...

Mr CUNNINGHAM — If the teachers want to pursue their own studies, absolutely. We have currently got four teachers involved in BASTOW courses at the moment. One of our younger ones is in a program called Leaders in the Making. If teachers want to further their qualifications or acknowledge their skills then absolutely. I would certainly encourage that.

Ms MILLER — It’s been suggested to the committee that it is difficult to find and access quality professional development in educating gifted and talented students. Do you agree with this and how can professional development for teachers of gifted and talented students in Victoria be improved?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — It’s difficult to find actual gifted and talented professional development?

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — PD. I mean there's the VAGTC.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — They have regular professional sessions.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — They have different things they quite often offer. They are a reputable group.

Ms MILLER — What about when you are attracting teachers? Say, for example, if you leave and your job is to employ another teacher, how do you decide what kind of teacher would be suitable to identify students' talents and abilities and then be in a position to accelerate them or extend them if you deem that to be appropriate?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — There is a set process that schools have to go through. Obviously we advertise the position and anyone who wants to apply can. Through their addressing of the criteria we will look at where their skills are. Those that do a lot of research before applying for the position will actually find out that the school is well-known for that area and they can identify themselves through their application and then it comes to the process but again, we don't put any specific tags to it saying you have to have any particular skills or abilities. Over my time here we have had a lot of new teachers come in and because there's that other experience that has been here, again people like Cris, they very much feed off the knowledge that's already here and that actually helps them grow and be able to cater for the children as well.

The CHAIR — Do you think that there are specific skill sets that teachers require when educating particularly the cohort of gifted and talented kids as opposed to other kids in the classroom?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — A number of them will have their special needs that need to be taken into consideration. Absolutely. That is where the teachers work very closely with the parents having regular meetings and putting in place plans or individual learning plans to support those children in the particular areas that they need. Some need it emotionally and socially and others need that plan to identify the areas that academically they'll be focused on and directed. There is certainly the need to identify that.

The CHAIR — In terms of providing direction for the kids once they've completed their primary school year and they've identified as potentially having gifted and talented ability, do you provide some guidance and direction of potentially secondary schools that might be able to...

Mr CUNNINGHAM — No, we wouldn't — the children have the opportunity to apply for scholarships and we share any of that information that the school has to encourage the children to do that but as for actually identifying the school that a child should go to, we would be hesitant to do that. If you make a recommendation and the parents take it and it doesn't work then that obviously can create repercussions in itself. As a part of the Gifted and Talented Parent's Support Group that we have, we had Millicent from CHIP come in and talk to the parents about how to select a secondary school for your child and she went through the different aspects of government/private schools and then the different range of those where they go to the Australian Grammar Schools, I think, Association. Just looked at a different range of things, whether they wanted to go to a denominational, non-denominational, government, private — that was very informative support to the parents. I certainly thought we would do that again.

The CHAIR — In terms of parents, and certainly parents of this cohort of kids, do you find they are constantly seeking information and knowledge and are looking at additional programs and support for the kids?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — Very much so. Not all of them but the vast majority of them certainly have a lot of interest in their child's education — which is great — and they are willing to work with the school.

The CHAIR — Cris, you particularly mentioned the Bright Futures program and certainly that assisted in terms of a bit of resurgence and focus; do you think that over the course of the years as Bright Futures was no longer was sort of part of the framework anymore, do you think that there's been a lack of direction in

the area of gifted and talented education and that there is a need for a policy that is a bit more guided in terms of supporting these particular cohort of kids?

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — It is probably a good idea to have a similar policy, I think, up and running again for each school to base their whole framework on. I think it would be a great support. I know that it injected a lot of interest to all schools to look into incorporating it within their schools. I feel at this school we haven't slumped — every year we keep building and try to make it better. So that's what I see at this school, definitely not going backwards at all.

The CHAIR — Have you got anything else Elizabeth?

Ms MILLER — If I could ask you, what would you say this particular school specialised in? I guess the question is really academic or does it cater for arts or sport if the students are gifted or talented?

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — It is broad at this school. Very broad.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — The school — correct me if I'm wrong — was known for the academics a number of years ago but in the last half-a-dozen years we have been broadening that.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — I'd say around the earlier days the way we were catering for the highly able and gifted were through extra curricula programs, which I think we were quite known for and which were very broad — anything from performing arts to solar powered-type activities — a lot of programs. But I'd say in the last, say, five or six years it's more within our daily programs, our differentiated curriculum, every single day all the disciplines that we're catering for the gifted students as well as these other broad range, more individual programs that they can tap into and there is enough there to cater for the variety of talents of all students.

Mr ELASMAR — Talking here on the supporting parents, many of the parents said in their submissions that they struggled to get enough guidance or information. What sort of information or support do you give to the parents?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — With regards to the parent group that we have — we don't identify the people who can come — it is put out there through the newsletter when we're having them. Any parent that wants to come along can come along. We offer support in the sense they have regular contact with staff so they can talk about the development and progress their child is making and any issues or matters that may arise. There's also the opportunity for the parents to meet and talk with us, the school. But also to talk amongst themselves. That is probably the greatest support that we can offer — the opportunity for the parents to sit down and talk to each other about the challenges that they're facing, what resources they've got. When we have the meetings the parents will quite often bring along an article or book they've found to share with the others. They go, "Wow!, this is fantastic." One of the earlier meetings when I was here there was a child in grade 2 who had basically read everything at his level and his concern was that the type of material that his son is now up to reading is starting to have connotations and inappropriate language. He didn't want to expose his child to this but he needed to know what the next level of books was that he could read. Through talking with the other parents at that particular meeting they came up with a range of books and going back to Aesop's Fables and Moby Dick and Gulliver's Travels and getting some of the old books out. They are of great support to themselves and have actually set up a bit like a web page where the parents can add comments and see the comments of others.

The CHAIR — Is there anything that you'd like to add in terms of concluding remarks that you feel might assist us with our inquiries of looking at this cohort of kids?

Mr CUNNINGHAM — Not particularly. Good luck and we look forward to the outcome and I suppose our question to you is what is the expected outcome of the inquiry? What is the benefit to schools?

The CHAIR — Certainly from what we have been hearing is that there is a lack of policy around this area. So we would hope that there would be a policy developed in supporting gifted and talented kids, along

with this a whole host of different recommendations, which we would certainly be looking at putting forward, and the hope that this becomes an area of focus within the government for laying the foundations going forward. I think it is probably right in terms of what you said before about the Bright Futures, that there was a focus in this area for some time and that it would be fair to say that over the course of time it hasn't necessarily been the same sort of focus there and that particularly, I think, parents get a bit lost.

Ms STAVROU MARTYN — I think if you look under “gifted education policy department” there’s nothing there.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — There is guidelines there about — if you look under the gifted education aspect there are some resources there.

The CHAIR — Absolutely.

Mr CUNNINGHAM — Guidelines for choosing a school and advice there but obviously the more information there can be for everybody to access the better.

The CHAIR — There are certainly a whole lot of very good examples of people who are doing things but it is not necessarily a consistent approach in terms of this area. Thank you very much for having us out here and for taking part in the inquiry process.

Witnesses withdrew.