

ST PETER'S



AQUINAS Program



ADVANCED THINKERS

We are individuals who demonstrate an elevated level of intellectual curiosity, critical reasoning, and innovative problem-solving skills



QUESTIONING MINDS

We are individuals characterised by a persistent and inquisitive approach to information, constantly seeking to explore, analyse, and challenge ideas, fostering a mindset that prioritises curiosity and a deeper understanding of the world.



UNIQUE THOUGHTS

Our thoughts represent individual perspectives, ideas, and insights that are distinctive and original, reflecting personal creativity.



INQUISITIVE LEARNERS

We are inquisitive learners who approach learning with a natural curiosity, continuously asking questions and seeking deeper understanding.



NURTURED MINDS

We are individuals whose intellectual and emotional development must be thoughtfully cultivated and supported through education.



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

We endeavour to attain outstanding performance and achievements, reflecting a high level of knowledge, skills, and dedication in our academic endeavours.



STRATEGIC THINKING

We are individuals that enjoy analysing complex situations, anticipating future outcomes, and formulating well-planned goals.

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POSITION PAPER FOR THE AQUINAS Program

at St Peter's Primary School

Approved February 2025

St Peter's AQUINAS program aims to assist gifted and/or talented students in Years 3-6 by providing academic extension through the application of creative and critical thinking skills, and higher order thinking skills.

RATIONALE

"All students regardless of race, age or gender, by virtue of their dignity as human persons, have a right to an education that is suited to their particular needs and adapted to this ability."

Gravissimum Educationis.nl 196519

Declaration on Christian Education Pope Paul VI.

Testing, using a variety of assessments, has shown that all students benefit from additional support to further develop their academic potential. Children with exceptional abilities need access to appropriate programs to meet their learning needs. Students can then be supported and challenged to develop their gifts as to become talents within our school system.

Gifted and Talented students' abilities should be accepted, valued and fostered by all. It should be noted that children can be gifted but may not have had the opportunity to demonstrate their talents.

DEFINITION

Gagne's (2008) definition differentiates between natural abilities (gifts or aptitudes) and systematically developed skills (talents).

Giftedness can be defined as "the potential to perform at a level significantly beyond what might be expected from one's age peers in any area of human ability."

Talent is "an achievement at a level significantly beyond what might be expected from age-peers."

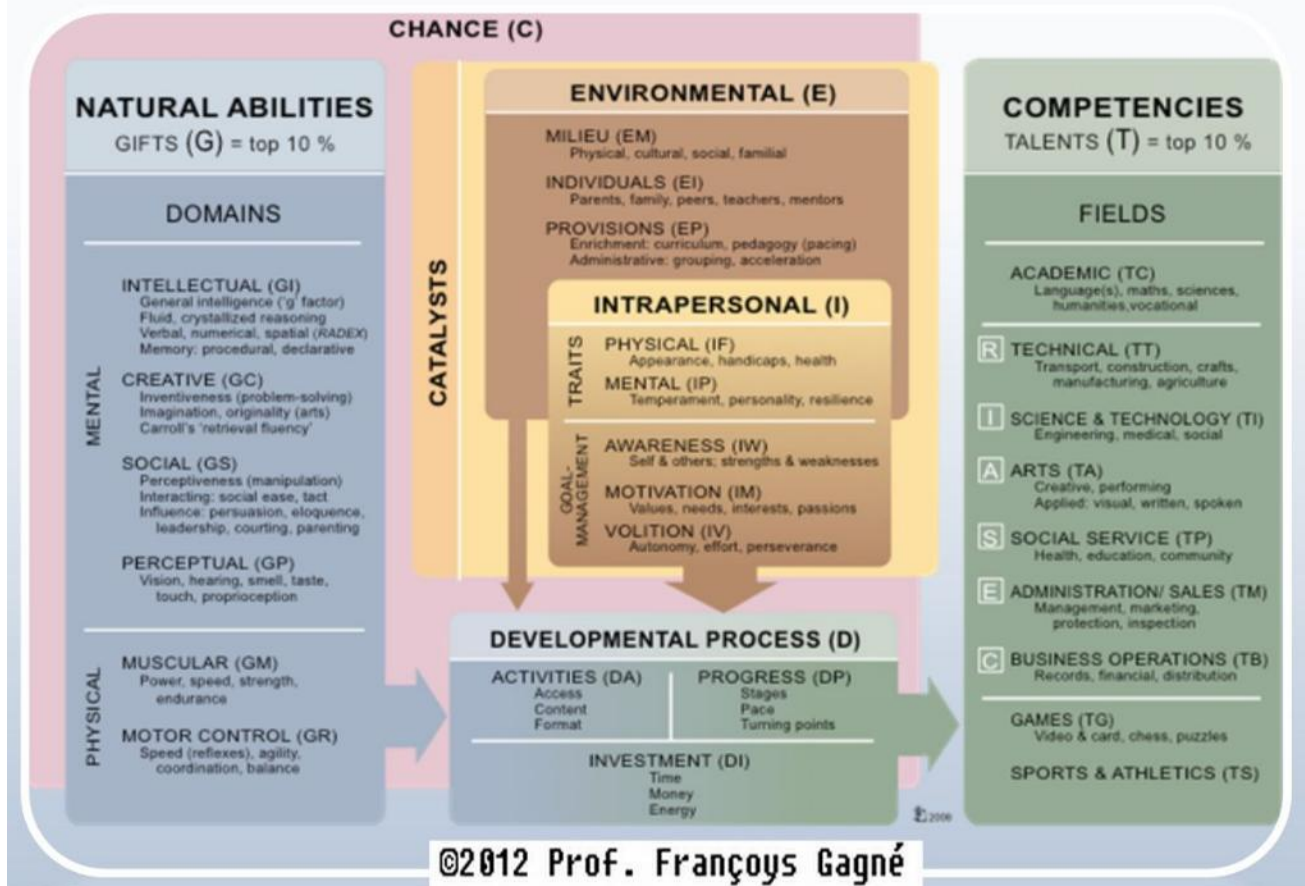
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Prof. François Gagne (2012) notes that talent development is formally defined as the systematic pursuit by students, over a significant period of time, of a structured program of activities leading to a specific excellence goal, in short, attaining talent (competency) in a field.

The **Developmental Model of Giftedness and Talent** shows factors that allow this to occur.

The DMGT 2.0



Gagné, F. (2009). Building gifts into talents: Detailed overview of the DMGT 2.0. In B. MacFarlane, & T. Stambaugh, (Eds.), *Leading change in gifted education: The festschrift of Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

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AQUINAS Program at St Peter's Catholic Primary

St Peter's AQUINAS program will endeavour to provide units of work that allow for the development and understanding of how gifts grow into talents.

Students eligible for selection into the program are those who excel or have the potential to excel in general academic, abstract reasoning, or specific ability areas such as English, Mathematics or Science (see 'identification' below). AQUINAS will assist in the journey from 'Gifted' (natural abilities) to 'Talented' (competencies) by providing the appropriate environmental catalyst, developmental process and assistance with intrapersonal development. Students may, or may not, be deeply motivated, or highly able to show their abilities in a variety of ways that may not be readily apparent without the use of diagnostic testing.

Ongoing inclusion in the program is not guaranteed. Rather, it will be dependent on a student's ability to maintain the standard of work in their regular classes as well as the program. **Review will occur each term with the classroom teacher and the AQUINAS program teacher.**

As this program is in addition to standard classroom programs, all activities are expected to be undertaken and completed in class time.

AQUINAS program aims to:

Provide more positive educational outcomes for gifted students through:

- appropriate identification using diagnostic testing
- provision of well-planned enrichment (class withdrawal) programs
- provision for early identification
- provision of external opportunities when possible and appropriate
- individual support where appropriate
- inclusion of students in relevant competitions and experiences external to St Peter's Primary School
- ongoing professional development of the Gifted and Talented Teacher, all staff and others as appropriate, in the area of gifted education
- network meetings in schools and relevant organisations including Catholic Education WA (CEWA) and other Independent and Department of Education schools.

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IDENTIFICATION (Years 3 – 6)

Inclusion in the programme in Years 3-6 will be considered according to:

- diagnostic testing (e.g., AGAT, TOLA and other relevant testing i.e., MYAT)
- standardised testing such as NAPLAN
- student and parent commitment to learning.
- external psychometric testing by a practicing psychologist (i.e., WISC or Stanford Binet)
- classroom & AQUINAS program teacher support
- Principal approval

PROVISION (Years 3 – 6)

Appropriate provision could include a combination of the following:

- inclusion in a weekly withdrawal extension programme
- opportunities for students to work on STEM projects.
- opportunities for students to develop their creative and critical thinking.
- inclusion of students in relevant competitions and experiences external to St Peter's Primary School which may include:
 - Tim Winton Writing Competition
 - Minecraft Indigital Challenge
 - National History Challenge
 - Science Talent Search
 - Tournament of the Minds
 - 'Have Sum Fun' Maths Competition
 - Cluedunnit (Law Society of WA)
 - Young ICT Explorers
 - Royal Show – Scarecrow Build
 - STEM – Video Game Challenge
 - Make Your Own Storybook Competition
 - STEM MAD – CEWA

AQUINAS PROGRAM FORMAT (Years 3 – 6)

Identified students in Years 3-6 will be **withdrawn** for up to 150 minutes per week.

The activities undertaken in these classes will involve the further development of a variety of skills including:

- independent working skills
- research skills
- problem solving skills
- intrinsic motivation
- higher order thinking skills
- self-regulation
- self-confidence
- questioning and posing problem skills

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ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION (Years 3 – 6)

Students will be assessed using:

- teacher feedback via rubrics & reflection sheets
- self-assessment rubrics & reflection sheets
- peer assessment rubrics & reflection sheets
- semester overviews & feedback assessments using descriptors taken from the Critical and Creative thinking skills learning continuum, a component of the General Capability section of the Australian Curriculum.

TIMES OF WITHDRAWAL SESSIONS (Years 3-6)

Year	Allocated Time
3	100 minutes
4	100 minutes
5	100 minutes
6	150 minutes

CURRIUCLUM SUPPORT (PP-2)

Students with psychometric testing using internal or external psychologist showing a gifted IO (as suggested by Rogers and Vialle), will be offered support by the GATe teacher.

COMPUTER ACCESS

The children will have access to the school computer network and the internet.

EXTERNAL ROLE

The AQUINAS Teacher's external role could include:

- network meetings with other schools and relevant organisations
- working in partnership with schools and organisations to create opportunities for the St Peter's students.

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POLICY GLOSSARY

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
AGAT	ACER General Ability Tests (AGAT). The ACER General Ability Tests (AGAT) 2nd Edition is a series of tests designed to assist teachers of students aged seven to sixteen years (approximately Year 2 to Year 10) in their assessment of students' general reasoning ability. AGAT 2nd edition assesses 5 reasoning strands for a comprehensive understanding of your child's general reasoning abilities – Verbal, Numerical, Abstract (visual), Kinetic & Spatial
CEWA	Catholic Education Western Australia
MYAT	The Middle Years Ability Test (MYAT) is a test of general ability designed to assist teachers in their assessment of students aged ten to fifteen years. As well as verbal and numerical reasoning items in the tradition of the ACER intermediate tests, MYAT includes non-verbal (or abstract) reasoning items, giving a more complete picture of students' general ability.
SPM	Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices is designed to assess non-verbal reasoning. It can be completed in the earliest years of schooling through to until the age of 90.
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TOLA	TEST OF LEARNING ABILITY – TOLA 4 and 6 This test has been designed to measure broad language and reasoning abilities which correlate with academic success. The TOLA has three components: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Verbal comprehension as measured by work knowledge using vocabulary-synonym items.2. Problem solving items of a mathematical kind.3. Verbal analysis and reasoning as measured by analogies.

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COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED INDIVIDUALS

Because gifted children are so diverse, not all individuals exhibit all characteristics all the time. However, there are common characteristics that many gifted individuals share:

- unusual alertness, even in infancy
- rapid learner; puts thoughts together quickly.
- excellent memory
- unusually large vocabulary and complex sentence structure for age
- advanced comprehension of word nuances, metaphors and abstract ideas
- enjoys solving problems, especially with numbers and puzzles
- often self-taught reading and writing skills as pre-schooler
- deep, intense feelings and reactions
- highly sensitive
- thinking is abstract, complex, logical and insightful
- idealism and sense of justice at early age
- concern with social and political issues and injustices
- longer attention span and intense concentration
- preoccupied with own thoughts—daydreamer
- learn basic skills quickly and with little practice
- ask probing questions
- wide range of interests (or extreme focus in one area)
- highly developed curiosity
- interest in experimenting and doing things differently
- puts ideas or things together that are not typical
- keen and/or unusual sense of humour
- desire to organise people/things through games or complex schemas
- vivid imagination (and imaginary playmates when in preschool)

Webb, J., Gore, J., Amend, E., DeVries, A. (2007). *A parent's guide to gifted children*. Tuscon, AZ: Great Potential Press

See more at: <https://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/my-child-gifted/common-characteristics-gifted-individuals#sthash.CBRiImpN.dpuf>