



Francis Jordan Catholic School

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SPARKS PROCEDURE

RATIONALE:

SPARKS recognises the innate dignity of each individual and acknowledges the school's responsibility to provide enriched instruction. It provides opportunities that enable and encourage students to develop to their full potential.

Francis Jordan Catholic School's enrichment program, SPARKS, considers talents in all relevant academic domains.

AIMS:

- To identify, select and assist children with high academic potential.
- To work cooperatively with classroom teachers to provide support material where required.
- To communicate with and support parents who have students in the program.

ORGANISATION:

- SPARKS classes will run for 45 minutes per week for students in Year 3 to 6

ANNUAL TESTING:

Francis Jordan Catholic School recognises that students' needs change over time and annual testing permits students to enter and leave the enrichment program. Annual re-screening and reevaluation of students' needs is key to maximising the effectiveness of academic development programs (Kain, 2015).

Cognitive ability is not fixed, but consists of developed skills, which may grow, and adapt over a lifetime. Just like height, students vary in the pace at which their cognitive abilities develop - sometimes jumping ahead and sometimes falling a bit behind their peers. These changes in performance, relative to peers, may mean that students who need enriched instruction in early grades may not show exceptional performance or ability in later grades. Other students may suddenly start to show exceptional ability in later grades. Just like height, the earlier measurement was not necessarily wrong; it just represents a characteristic that is developing at different rates for different students (Lohman & Korb, 2006).

IDENTIFICATION:

- Children are selected based on their results in the AGAT and PAT testing completed at the end of each school year.
- Students will be considered for a place if they have achieved a stanine 7 or higher in the AGAT test and their combined raw scores for PAT R, PAT M and AGAT are higher than 20.
- AGAT tests are administered to new students, when required.
- Teacher consultation and behavioural checklists are also taken into consideration when required.
- Continual involvement in the programme will be subject to students completing set tasks and active participation in all activities.

AGAT TESTING:

AGAT is a researched and nationally normed assessment. The test provides an estimate of a student's general intellectual ability and aptitude. AGAT provides:

- Scores for different strands (Verbal, Numerical and Abstract Reasoning)
- Percentiles and stanines that allow for comparison with national norm groups at different year levels.

COMMUNICATION:

- Parents will receive an email after testing has been completed each year to notify them if their child has been selected for the SPARKS program.
- Parents will receive an email if their child participated in the SPARKS program, but has not met the selection criteria for the current year.

PROVISION:

Children will be given the opportunity to attend a withdrawal class with their intellectual peers. A variety of creative, lateral thinking and problem-solving approaches will be used.

A successful program will allow students an opportunity to undertake a fast-paced, intellectually rigorous curriculum matched to their abilities and interests, in company with other students of similar abilities. (Gross 1997)

ROLE OF THE SPARKS TEACHER:

It is the responsibility of the SPARKS Teacher to be aware of current issues and processes involved with identification of the students and provision of programs for these students. The teacher should:

- Support children and their families.
- Support the classroom teachers in their endeavours to cater for the students.
- Monitor the progress of the identified students.
- Provide opportunities for challenge and assist students to reach their potential.

EVALUATION:

Students will have at least one major assignment or assessment piece for each theme that is covered. Clear criteria for evaluation based on the Judging Standards in the Western Australian Curriculum will be given to the children with each assessment.

Gagne, F. (2003). Transforming gifts into talents: The DMGT as a developmental theory. In N. Colangelo & G. Davis (Editors.). Handbook of Gifted Education (3rd edition). Boston, Mass.: Allyn & Bacon

Gross, M. (1997). How ability grouping turns big fish into little fish – or does it? Of optical illusions and optimal environments. Australasian Journal of Gifted Education, 6 (2),18-30.

Kain, J. (2015). The Essentials: Using Ability Tests in Gifted and Talented Identification Programs. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Lohman, D. F., & Korb, K. (2006). Gifted today but not tomorrow? Longitudinal changes in ITBS and CogAT scores during elementary school. Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 29, 451-484. Retrieve from https://faculty.education.uiowa.edu/docs/dlohman/Gifted_Today.pdf