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Gifted and talented education in Aotearoa New Zealand:
A primary school perspective

a thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education

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2016
Abstract

This research explores the state of gifted and talented education in New Zealand following the 2008 change in government and consequent shift in educational priorities. This case study examines the provision of gifted and talented education in a full, co-educational primary school in a provincial area. Data gathered from a variety of stakeholders indicate that, in its recent history, the school’s provision varied considerably – from applying a structured, whole-school approach to lacking official policies and practices, to re-establishing school-wide provision. Provision was dependent on management priorities that often echoed national priorities that took the focus off of gifted and talented learners. These findings suggest that if national priorities do not explicitly include gifted and talented learners along with learners with special educational needs, then these students may be left vulnerable as schools shift their focus elsewhere. Recommendations for further research and effective provision of gifted and talented education are included.
Acknowledgements

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I am also fortunate to be surrounded by a faith community that has supported my family and me during the inevitable triumphs and trials of life that occurred during this project. Special thanks go to my husband, Neil, who has believed in me and encouraged me throughout the process.

Lastly, I dedicate this work to my sons, Gus and Jesse, whose gifts have inspired this endeavour.
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## Glossary and List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Domain Areas</strong></th>
<th>The full range of ability areas whether natural abilities or developed talents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECT</strong></td>
<td>Enrichment Class Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EOTC</strong></td>
<td>Education Outside of the Classroom typically involving learning opportunities away from the school grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Education Plan</strong></td>
<td>A plan detailing adaptations to a school’s programme for a student identified as requiring differentiated instruction and expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kotahitanga</strong></td>
<td>Unity, togetherness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LitQuiz</strong></td>
<td>A competition based on children’s literature for students 10-13 years of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathex</strong></td>
<td>A mathematics competition available to Year 7 – 10 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NAGs</strong></td>
<td>National Administration Guidelines detail the Ministry’s administrative requirements for school leaders and boards of trustees in such areas as student achievement and employment and personnel matters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NAG 1</strong></td>
<td>NAG 1 (c) iii states that schools, through appropriate assessment data, must identify students and groups of students who have special education needs, including gifted and talented learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Standards</strong></td>
<td>A set of standards detailing the Ministry’s expectations of achievement in reading, writing and mathematics for students in Years 1 to 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NCEA</strong></td>
<td>National Certificates of Educational Achievement are national qualifications for senior students offering internal and external standards across the learning areas in the New Zealand Curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAT</td>
<td>Progressive Achievement Tests are standardised tests for literacy and numeracy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLD</td>
<td>Professional Learning and Development which is a requirement for teachers to maintain their certificate to practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENCO</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs Coordinator which is a leadership position in schools with overall responsibility for the organisation of adaptations to the teaching and learning for students with special needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Toi Tupu</td>
<td>A Ministry PLD provider in a range of areas in education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whakahihi</td>
<td>Arrogant, boastful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whakama</td>
<td>Embarrassing, shameful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>