

**National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY)**

**SUMMER SCHOOLS 2005, FOLLOW-UP REPORT; the impact  
of the summer schools**

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**February 2006**

**National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth**

**Summer Schools 2005, Follow-up Report; the impact of the summer schools**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **The NAGTY summer schools, 2005**

During the summer of 2005, the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) offered summer schools for its student members at eight universities throughout England. The host universities – of Warwick, York, Lancaster, Imperial College London, Christ Church College Canterbury, Durham, Bristol and Leeds – provided 53 courses, or strands. All of these strands lasted for two weeks, with the exception of those at the University of Warwick and Christ Church College Canterbury, which were of three weeks duration. Altogether 1,000 students, between the ages of 11 and 16 attended the 2005 summer schools, which was the fourth year in which NAGTY had offered the experience to its student members.

### **The evaluation**

This report is part of the fourth independent evaluation of the NAGTY summer schools conducted by the Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR). The reporting process for the 2005 evaluation was different from previous years. For the 2005 summer schools, CEDAR's reporting was presented in three parts:

- An examination of Seven Case Study Strands, identified by NAGTY as being exemplar strands
- The overall Summer School 2005 report
- This report, being the follow-up report, which examines the impact of the summer school experience.

This **Executive Summary** is presented in three sections:

- Methodology
- Headline conclusions
- Main Findings

## **1. Methodology**

The methodology was a mixed methods approach, combining questionnaires to summer school students, students' parents/guardians, and to gifted and talented co-ordinators at students' schools. The greater part of the follow-up work, therefore, was built around the questionnaires. The response rate to the questionnaires was high, being:

- Students' parents/guardians: 633 responses out of 1,000 (63%)
- Summer school responses: 590 responses out of 1,000 (59%)
- Gifted & talented co-ordinators: 249 responses out of 592 (42%)

In addition to the questionnaires, a random selection of students, qualified teachers, strand leaders and residential assistants were contacted to arrange telephone interviews to discuss reflections on the summer school experience. Some 100 letters and e-mails were sent, in two attempts, to these groups. However, only a very small number of respondents were available to be interviewed – five qualified teachers, three strand academics, three residential assistants, and two students.

## **2. Headline Conclusions**

- In retrospect, 99.6% of students reported that the summer school experience had been 'very worthwhile' or 'worthwhile' to them personally.
- 98.4% of student respondents indicated that they would like to attend another NAGTY summer school.
- 96.1% of parental respondents indicated that they thought that their child would benefit 'a great deal' or 'to some extent' from attending another NAGTY summer school.
- 90% of parental respondents agreed that their children's experience of summer school had increased their desire, 'a great deal' or 'to some extent', to take part in other NAGTY activities.
- The main concerns, with regard to the summer school, raised by both gifted and talented co-ordinators and parents, were connected with funding issues, and problems with some of the reporting from summer schools to parents and schools.

- For students, the impact of summer school attendance was overwhelmingly positive in terms of lasting academic, social and friendship benefits.
- Some parents identified a divergence between their children's positive experience of education at summer school and a less positive experience of school.

### **3. Main findings**

The aim of this report was to examine the impact of the summer school attendance as understood by student participants, their parents and gifted and talented co-ordinators from students' schools. The data collected indicated that the respondents felt that there were a number of salient issues, which fell into three areas:

1. The impact of summer school attendance on students
2. Issues related to the summer school experience
3. The success of the summer schools

#### ***The impact of summer school attendance on students***

- The summer school experience appears to have had a positive impact on the majority of summer school students in a number of key areas relating to their lives beyond the summer school.
- Summer school students, and their parents, provided evidence that showed that the overwhelming majority of the students felt that, as a result of their summer school experience, they were more confident over a range of education related skills. Specifically, students were seen to have greater confidence in speaking in class, in problem solving, and in written work.
- Many summer school students also exhibited a greater enthusiasm for education, or a renewed enthusiasm for education.
- The experience of the summer schools, all held at universities in England, appeared to have increased the desire of a substantial number of students to attend university in future. In addition, some students found that they had a clearer idea about what courses they wished to take at university. A notable minority of students, from family backgrounds distinguished by no university experience, had been provided with essential knowledge about university,

which acted as positive encouragement for them in terms of their educational futures.

- Notable gains in terms of social skills were also recorded by respondents, with the majority of students noting that positive socialising experiences at the summer schools had benefited them by making it easier for them to socialise since summer school.
- Students and parents also reported that almost all summer school attendees made friendships at the summer schools that remained active, with students keeping in touch with summer school friends by a variety of means, including meetings, and group reunions.
- The key problem emerging from the evidence gathered about the impact of the summer school experience related to a divergence between positive experiences of summer school, and negative experiences of school. Although it was a minority of respondents who reported this problem, it was a notable issue.

#### ***Issues related to the summer school experience***

- A minority of parents and school gifted and talented co-ordinators indicated that there were problems with the summer school reporting system. These problems ranged from the failure to receive reports to inadequate and/or inaccurate reports being received. This was seen to be a serious issue by those who noted it.
- School gifted and talented co-ordinators raised a number of issues that they felt had to be addressed. These included funding problems, something that many schools found problematic, communication problems between schools and NAGTY, and, for a small group, issues about the role of NAGTY.

#### ***The success of the Summer Schools***

- The analysis of the post-summer school data indicated that the overall picture of the impact of the summer school experience was characterised by success.

- Almost all student respondents indicated that they found the summer school experience an extremely valuable and important one, with lasting benefits for their academic and social lives.
- Almost all the student respondents indicated that they would like to return to another NAGTY summer school in future.
- Parents reported that their children benefited from the summer school experience, that they were more interested in NAGTY activities as a result of attending summer school, and that, in the parents' view, attendance at a further summer school would be of benefit to their children.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 The NAGTY Summer Schools Reports, 2005**

During the summer of 2005, the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) offered summer schools for its student members at eight universities across England. The host universities – of Warwick, York, Imperial College, London, Christ Church College Canterbury, Durham, Bristol, and Leeds – provided 53 courses, or strands. All of these strands lasted for two weeks, with the exception of those at the University of Warwick and Christ Church College Canterbury, which were of three weeks duration. Altogether, 1,000 students, between the ages of 11 and 16 attended the 2005 summer schools, which was the fourth year in which NAGTY had offered the experience to its student members.

As with previous summer schools, the independent evaluation of the 2005 summer schools was carried out by the Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR) at the University of Warwick. The reporting process for the 2005 evaluation is different from previous years. For the 2005 summer schools, CEDAR's reporting is presented in three parts:

- Cullen, S., Cullen, M.A., and Lindsay, G., *NAGTY Summer Schools 2005, Seven Case Study Strands*, CEDAR, University of Warwick, November 2005.
- Cullen, S., Hartas, D., Cullen, M.A., and Lindsay, G., *NAGTY Evaluation of the Summer Schools 2005*, CEDAR, University of Warwick, November 2005.
- Cullen, S., and Lindsay, G., *The Impact of the NAGTY Summer Schools 2005*, CEDAR, University of Warwick, January 2006.

### **1.2 Report Overview**

This report is based on follow-up data gathered from participating NAGTY students, their parents, NAGTY summer school students' schools, and summer school strand staff. Five key themes emerged from the data, which have been grouped under two headings – (i) the impact of summer school attendance on students, and students' experience of daily school life, and (ii) issues relating to specific aspects of the summer school experience. In addition, the overall success of the summer schools

has been considered as a third element of the report. The key themes are listed below:

#### 1. Impact of summer school attendance on students

- (i) Improved educational confidence among summer school students at school. Increased, or renewed, enthusiasm, for education. Enhanced desire to attend university.
- (ii) Increased social confidence among summer school students in their day to day lives. The maintenance of highly valued friendships made at summer school.
- (iii) Concern over the divergence between summer school students' experience of summer school based education, and school based education.

#### 2. Specific issues relating to NAGTY and the summer schools

- (iv) Problems with aspects of the summer school reporting system.
- (v) Issues relating to funding, and schools' lack of knowledge and understanding of NAGTY and the summer school programme.

#### 3. NAGTY summer schools – an overall success

### **1.3 Methodology**

The methodology was a mixed methods approach, combining questionnaires to summer school students, students' parents/guardians, and to gifted and talented co-ordinators at students' schools. The greater part of the follow-up work, therefore, was built around the questionnaires. The response rate to the questionnaires was high, being:

- Students' parents/guardians: 633 responses out of 1,000 (63%)
- Summer school responses: 590 responses out of 1,000 (59%)
- Gifted & talented co-ordinators: 249 responses out of 592 (42%)

The statistical information provided by the closed questions on the questionnaires formed a central part of the data on which this report is built. In addition, each questionnaire contained an open question in which respondents were asked to add any further observations that they wished to make. The response rate to the open questions was very high, with many respondents also taking the opportunity to add additional sheets of information to the questionnaire. All parent and student respondents completed the open question on their questionnaires, and 242 out of 249 gifted and talented co-ordinators responded to the open question on their questionnaire. The open questions provided a remarkably limited range of responses by each group, with the same issues being raised within each respondent group. So, for example, analysis of student responses to the open question showed that their answers could be grouped under five headings: improvements in educational confidence and an increased enthusiasm for education; improvements in social confidence; the making and maintenance of highly valued friendships; problems with daily schooling, especially in comparison with the summer school experience; and a feeling of increased independence. Similarly, open question responses from school gifted and talented co-ordinators could be grouped under seven headings, while parent/guardian responses fell into six groupings. All the issues raised by respondents in the open questions were related to closed questions, and enabled the wider applicability of those issues to be gauged by statistics drawn from the closed questions.

In addition to the questionnaires, a random selection of students, qualified teachers, strand leaders and residential assistants were contacted to arrange telephone interviews to discuss reflections on the summer school experience. Some 100 letters and e-mails were sent, in two attempts, to these groups. However, only a very small number of respondents were available to be interviewed – five qualified teachers, three strand academics, three residential assistants, and two students. The information they provided corroborated the extensive data gathered by the questionnaires, and has been subsumed in that information source.

## **2. IMPACT OF SUMMER SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ON STUDENTS**

### **2.1 Educational impacts**

The follow-up research was particularly focused on assessing whether or not the experience of a NAGTY summer school had any noticeable impact, as defined by students, parents and teachers, on students' educational ability and confidence. Overall, the response to the questionnaires, both the closed and open questions, indicated that the experience of the summer schools had a positive impact upon students' academic abilities, confidence in school, and in terms of their general enthusiasm for learning. In addition, a notable group of respondents indicated that students' desire to attend university in future had been enhanced by their experience of summer school.

#### ***2.1.1 Improved educational confidence***

The four closed questions on the students' post-summer school questionnaire relating to areas associated with improved educational confidence resulting from the NAGTY summer school experience, all showed a positive response rate in excess of 70% of respondents. This high level of association by students of summer school attendance with increased confidence in school was further highlighted by responses to the open question; inviting students to, 'tell us what effect/s you feel that the summer school has had on your life'. Responses associated with improved educational confidence and performance were the most frequently occurring. This picture was further enhanced by parents' responses, which indicated even higher levels of improvement associated with summer school attendance. The same was also true in terms of the gifted and talented co-coordinators' response to the relevant questionnaire question.

Specific questions on the impact of the summer school learning experience asked students to consider this aspect of their participation in summer school in relation to problem solving, independent learning, knowledge and improved effectiveness in school learning. All responses indicated a high level of positive impact on these areas. For example, 77.7% of student respondents indicated that they felt that the impact of summer school on their ability to solve problems had been of 'high' or 'medium' impact (Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1 Students' responses to: how do you rate the level of impact of the summer school in terms of the following-: improving your ability to solve problems?\***

	Frequency	%
High impact	91	15.5
Medium impact	366	62.2
Low impact	98	16.7
No impact	33	5.6
N =	588	

\*N.B. missing responses were usually extremely low (typically representing less than 1% of total responses). Hence all percentages in the tables are given as valid percentages, unless otherwise indicated.

Some responses to the open question provided some further details of how some students saw improvements in this area. One student noted, 'I think more openly about ideas and try to come up with different ideas', while another commented, 'I also think it has helped me to improve my problem-solving and thinking skills', '[I] have better thought-out beliefs and opinions'. Nonetheless, most of the open question commentary by students dealt with other issues of academic confidence building.

The lowest positive response to a question concerning the impact of the learning experience came with the question concerning students' ability to work on their own (Table 2.2). However, this still produced a 71.3% 'high' and 'medium' impact response rate.

**Table 2.2 Students' responses to: how do you rate the level of impact of the summer school in terms of the following: improving your ability to work on your own?**

	Frequency	%
High impact	138	23.4
Medium impact	282	47.9
Low impact	127	21.6
No impact	42	7.1
N =	589	

Students did not mention this facet of the impact of the summer school on their learning, so it is, therefore, difficult to suggest why this question generated a slightly less positive link than others related to the learning experience.

Students indicated, both in response to the closed and open questions that their experience of the summer school had enabled them to acquire knowledge that they used at school. Students noted, for example, that, ‘it has greatly improved my work in German [...] and little bits of knowledge I picked up at summer school have been useful everywhere’, and ‘it improved my knowledge and interest in space science to a great extent’. In terms of the closed question, 85.7% of student respondents indicated that, in terms of adding knowledge that was usable at school, they had experienced a ‘high’ or ‘medium’ impact (Table 2.3).

**Table 2.3 Students’ responses to: how do you rate the level of impact of the summer school in terms of: - adding knowledge that you have been able to use at school?**

	Frequency	%
High impact	319	54.3
Medium impact	185	31.5
Low impact	67	11.4
No impact	17	2.9
N =	588	

The picture that emerges from the student responses is that attendance at a NAGTY summer school had, in the great majority of cases, a positive impact upon students’ ability to learn more effectively at school. This finding was reinforced by both the students’ parents/guardians view of the same issue, and that of the gifted and talented coordinators at the students’ schools. Some 92.7% of parent/guardian respondents indicated that they felt that their child had benefited in terms of the acquisition of learning skills, ‘a great deal’, or ‘to some extent’ (Table 2.4).

**Table 2.4 Parents' responses to: how far do you think your child has benefited from the summer school in terms of: - learning skills?**

	Frequency	%
A great deal	318	50.6
To some extent	265	42.1
Slightly	34	5.4
Not at all	12	1.9
N =	629	

This finding is reinforced by the response of the students' gifted and talented coordinators, a substantial majority of whom also indicated that the learning skills of NAGTY students had been improved by summer school attendance (Table 2.5). Although a very small number (representing some 3.1% of gifted and talented coordinator respondents) indicated that they felt that learning skills had not improved, those who did not answer in a positive fashion more typically did so because of a lack of knowledge, which was to be expected if the coordinators had no personal experience of teaching the NAGTY students in question.

**Table 2.5 Gifted and Talented co-ordinators' responses to: students who attended a NAGTY summer school have improved learning skills as a result of the experience.**

	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	50	19.2
Agree	121	46.4
Disagree	8	3.1
Don't know	69	26.4
Total	248	95.0
Missing	13	5.0
N =	261	

Student respondents confirmed this picture, noting, for example, that 'the summer school has made me feel more confident academically', 'I feel that I am working harder in lessons with more focus', 'I found the summer school extremely helpful in terms of [...] my academic life', and, 'I have learnt so much, and I can continue my work'. Of all student respondents, 76.2% agreed that the summer schools had improved their ability to learn more effectively at school (Table 2.6).

**Table 2.6 Students' responses to: how do you rate the level of impact of the summer school in terms of: - improving your ability to learn more effectively at school?**

	Frequency	%
High impact	178	30.2
Medium impact	271	46.0
Low impact	103	17.5
No impact	37	6.3
N =	589	

Given the high level of positive evaluation, by students, parents/guardians and teachers of the impact of the summer school experience on students' subsequent experience of learning in schools, it is not surprising, perhaps, that 74.4% of parent/guardian respondents felt that their child's performance at school had improved as a result of summer school attendance (Table 2.7)

**Table 2.7 Parents' responses to: how far do you think your child has benefited from the summer school in terms of: - improved performance at school?**

	Frequency	%
A great deal	162	25.6
To some extent	295	46.6
Slightly	108	17.1
Not at all	49	7.7
Total	614	97.0
Missing	19	3.0
N =	633	

A number of parents had annotated the question box for this question, noting that their child's performance at school had always been of the highest order, and that it was, therefore, unlikely that it could improve. This factor may well account for at least some of the 49 respondents who indicated that their child's school performance had improved, 'not at all'.

The data collected in the follow-up phase enabled a clearer picture to be gained about the specific ways in which students felt that the summer school experience had

benefited them in academic terms. Questions were asked about improved self-confidence in written work, speaking in class, practical class work, and working with school peers. In addition, many of the open question responses by students also focused on these areas, particularly concerning confidence in speaking in class and working with others.

Students commented, for example, that, ‘I feel easier about speaking in lessons in school’, ‘I am more confident about speaking up in class but feel that the reactions of peers in school is bad compared to at NAGTY – where being smart was good/”cool”’, ‘summer school has given me much more confidence when interacting with other people’, ‘I can now speak confidently in front of a large audience’, and ‘it taught me lots about electronics and has made me more confident in most areas’. These types of experience appeared to have been common, and reflected the 77.7% of student respondents who said that attending summer school had improved their self-confidence in terms of speaking in class (Table 2.8).

**Table 2.8 Students’ responses to: how far has attending the summer school improved your self-confidence in terms of: - speaking in class?**

	Frequency	%
To a great extent	249	42.3
Somewhat	208	35.4
Slightly	89	15.1
Not at all	42	7.1
N =	588	

This experience of improved self-confidence arising from summer school attendance also applied, although to a lesser extent, to school written work, with 62.8% of student respondents indicating that they had experienced an increase in their self-confidence in this area (Table 2.9). Written work was not mentioned specifically in the open question responses by students, but was, perhaps, subsumed by them into general comments about improved self-confidence. The disparity between improved self-confidence in speaking in class and in written work, may, on the other hand, have been a product of the nature of teaching and learning on summer school strands, which, typically, stressed non-written forms.

**Table 2.9 Students' responses to: how far has attending the summer school improved your self-confidence in terms of: - written work?**

	Frequency	%
To a great extent	114	19.4
Somewhat	256	43.5
Slightly	152	25.8
Not at all	67	11.4
N =	589	

The lower rate of improvement in self-confidence in written work, compared with other aspects of learning continued to be apparent in terms of students' self-confidence in terms of practical work (Table 2.10) and in terms of working with peers (Table 2.11), both of which were key experiences for all summer school students, and in which areas the large majority of students felt that they had benefited.

**Table 2.10 Students' responses to: how far has attending the summer school improved your self-confidence in terms of: - practical work in class?**

	Frequency	%
To a great extent	210	35.8
Somewhat	220	37.5
Slightly	114	19.4
Not at all	43	7.3
N =	587	

**Table 2.11 Students' responses to: how far has attending the summer school improved your self-confidence in terms of: - working with your peers?**

	Frequency	%
To a great extent	254	43.2
Somewhat	208	35.4
Slightly	96	16.3
Not at all	30	5.1
N =	588	

### **2.1.2 Increased/renewed enthusiasm for education**

Both students and their parents indicated that the experience of summer school had led to a general increase in the students' enthusiasm for education. This encompassed both learning at school, and education in a wider sense. It also appears to have been an outcome that was experienced by students who felt that their schooling was not what it might be, and by students who gave no indication that they were uneasy with their formal education. For example, two students commented: 'It [summer school] made me more independent and confident. I realised that there is a bigger range of interesting things to learn about', and, 'I feel that I have been exposed to another side of learning, where you can have fun, and work at the same time'. Students also noted that they were more enthusiastic about contributing in school, for example, 'I have also become more confident in speaking and listening tasks at school', 'it has made me more confident in producing, sharing and discussing my work at school', and, 'being able to participate at a NAGTY Summer School as a student has made me more determined to take my education to the limit'. These comments were reflected in the response to the questionnaire question that focused on increased enjoyment of learning at school arising from participating in the summer schools, with 63.9% of student respondents believing that attendance at the summer school had a 'high' or 'medium' impact on enjoying learning at school more (Table 2.12).

**Table 2.12 Students' responses to: how do you rate the level of the summer school in terms of the following: - increasing your enjoyment of learning at school?**

	Frequency	%
High impact	157	26.7
Medium impact	219	37.2
Low impact	132	22.4
No impact	80	13.6
N =	588	

This picture was confirmed by students' parents/guardians, who made various comments about the ways in which summer school attendance had impacted upon their children's desire to learn. For example, parents commented, 'we noticed a

desire to read more challenging literature immediately. A more serious attitude to academic issues', 'he is more motivated at school to succeed, and has worked harder at school'. Some parents were aware of what they felt were the specific, summer school related, causes of increased enthusiasm for learning, with one respondent noting, 'our son has benefited greatly because working with others of an even better ability [at summer school] has given him the incentive to work harder and to the best of his ability'. And, others had seen quite dramatic changes in their children's attitude to education, for example, one parent commented, 'it has completely changed his attitude to learning. He has become enthusiastic, education can be "cool" – previously he was disengaged from the learning process'. In fact, the parents/guardians' assessment of the impact of the summer school experience on their children's wider attitude to education and learning was even more positive than the students, as 91.2% of parental respondents indicated that summer school attendance had 'to a great deal', or 'to some extent' increased their children's enthusiasm for learning (Table 2.13).

**Table 2.13 Parents' responses to: how far do you think your child has benefited from the summer school I terms of: - enthusiasm for learning?**

	Frequency	%
A great deal	400	63.7
To some extent	173	27.5
Slightly	43	6.8
Not at all	12	1.9
N =	628	

In some cases, it appeared that the impact of the summer school on a child's enthusiasm for learning not only carried over to the child's life at school, but had a wider impact:

'His relationships at school have improved – he is approaching learning more enthusiastically and is very motivated. As his school is in special measures at present, his teachers have come to rely upon him as a role model'.

### 2.1.3 New/increased desire to attend university

One noteworthy result of summer school attendance appeared to have been that exposure to a university environment confirmed many students in their desire to attend university, or, even more significantly, greatly encouraged those students from families without a history of university attendance to want to go to university. For students, the NAGTY summer schools gave them a taste of being away from home, increased their sense that they could cope in a residential situation, and gave them a positive experience of university that enabled them to imagine renewing that experience in future. The key experiences for the students were those of being away from home for two or three weeks, the sense of independence that successfully coping with this residential experience, and the resultant increase in confidence with reference to possible future absences from home. In all these areas, a very high percentage of respondents agreed that the effects of their residential experience had been positive (Table 2.14).

**Table 2.14 Students' responses to: perceived benefits from the residential experience of summer school**

Impact of the residential nature of summer school on students	Level of agreement (%)				N =
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Being away from home was a valuable experience for me	65.6	30.8	2.9	0.7	590
Spending 2/3 weeks away from home has made me feel more independent	63.7	30.1	4.9	1.4	589
I feel more confident about being away from home in the future	65.0	28.7	4.6	1.7	588

In their responses to the open question, students often made it clear that they linked the sense of independence gained from attending summer school to a feeling that they were better equipped for their futures. For example, students commented, "I now have a stronger sense of independence and confidence, and an idea about what

I want to do in the future’, ‘the summer school has made me feel more independent and more determined to work hard to get into a good university’, and, ‘I feel I have become more independent as a direct result of being away from home for two weeks’.

Parent respondents also indicated that they felt that the residential nature of the summer schools benefited their children, with over 99.4% of parents seeing it as a valuable experience, and 93.7% of parents linking it with an increase in their child’s sense of independence (Table 2.15)

**Table 2.15 Parents’ perceptions of the impact of the residential nature of summer schools on their children.**

Impact of the residential nature of summer school on students	Level of agreement (%)			
	A great deal	To some extent	Slightly	Not at all
N = 633				
The residential experience was valuable	91.5	7.9	0.5	0.2
Being away from home increased my child’s sense of independence	67.6	26.1	4.6	1.7

Parents frequently linked the summer school experience with a renewed or new desire to attend university on the part of their children. Typical comments included:

‘It gave him a very positive view on attending university in the future. Made him realise he was not unusual or a “boffin” but very similar to others.’

‘It gave her a sense of anticipation and enthusiasm or going to university, and improved her academic and social confidence’.

‘Now very motivated to go to university and to achieve good GCSE results’.

'Has given him a taste of the fun of academic learning, and a view into university life. This has helped him, because, despite his intelligence, he is not sure whether to go down the academic or vocational route.'

'The Summer School has made my child more determined to achieve the 'O' and 'A' levels he needs to get into the best university'.

'He is now determined to do well and go to a good university, realising there are more people "out there" like himself than he had imagined. His confidence and positive self-image have rocketed. Thanks.'

In many of the parents' eyes, the summer schools had sharpened their children's perception of the excitement of academic work, and, thanks to the social aspects of the experience, helped the children see that there were many other young people with similar interests and attitudes. This all happened in a university environment, in a residential situation that was, many students believed, akin to that experienced by undergraduates, and had brought the NAGTY students into contact with working academics. For some of the students from families with no history of university education, this experience appeared to have been crucial in encouraging them to think about university attendance in future. A small number of parents commented along these lines, a typical quotation being, 'neither his father nor myself had the opportunity of attending university, nor have any members of our immediate family, so this gave us all a little view into this world and removed some of the unknown',

## **2.2 Social impacts**

The NAGTY summer schools aimed to develop all aspects of the students' personalities, and sought to benefit the young people in terms of their social, as well as academic lives. Evidence provided by both students and parents indicated that the summer school experience had a notable impact upon the students' social lives. For the overwhelming majority of summer school attendees, the summer school itself provided a very positive social experience. Further, there was also a lasting impact, in social terms, as both children and parents reported improved social skills, and the maintenance of friendships made on the summer schools. Both these benefits had an impact upon the students once they had returned to their normal schooling and home lives.

### 2.2.1 Socialising

For almost all the NAGTY students, the experience of summer school was characterised not only by positive academic experiences, but also by highly enjoyable socialising. Students recognised benefits resulting from the social experience of summer school. In terms of the longer term impact of the experience, over 80% of student respondents reported that the summer school experience had made socialising at school easier for them (Table 2.16).

**Table 2.16 Students' responses to: how far do you agree with the following statement: attending the summer school has made socializing at school easier for me**

	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	201	34.1
Agree	271	45.9
Disagree	99	16.8
Strongly disagree	13	2.2
Missing	6	1.0
N =	590	

Improvements in social confidence and social skills was the second most frequently mentioned benefit that the students provided in response to the open question in the questionnaire. Students linked a general increase in their levels of confidence with a sense that they found it easier to socialise as a result of summer school attendance. For example, a student made connections between the variety of people she had met on the summer school, increased self-confidence, and friendship: 'summer school has given me much more confidence when interacting with other people, helped me learn about my own abilities, and make loads of new friends'. Other students made similar comments: 'it made me feel more open to the world as I met people from all different origins. It made me more confident', 'summer school has made me much more confident when meeting new people, and I made some brilliant new friends', '[I experienced] an improvement in social self-confidence', 'I feel it has made me more confident and it has made socialising easier', and, 'I feel a lot more confident when meeting new people, I am less shy and find it easier to socialise'.

The parents also overwhelmingly reported that their children had enjoyed the non-academic aspects of summer school, with 99.2% of parents saying that their child had enjoyed the social aspects of summer school ‘a great deal’ or ‘to some extent’, and 98.1% indicating that their child had enjoyed the leisure activities ‘a great deal’, or ‘to some extent’ (Table 2.17).

**Table 2.17 Parents’ responses to: how much did your child enjoy the non-academic aspects of the summer school?**

Non-academic aspects of summer school	Level of agreement (%)			
	A great deal	To some extent	Slightly	Not at all
N - 633				
My child enjoyed the social aspects	89.6	9.6	0.8	-
My child enjoyed the leisure activities	79.7	18.4	1.7	0.2

Parents were also keen to highlight the degree to which their children had benefited in social terms from summer school attendance, and were explicit about what they saw as the source of those social benefits, which they primarily saw as being a result of their children being able to mix with a large number of like-minded peers. Comments included, ‘he adored the social life, mixing with people on his own wavelength where he converse in “words of more than one syllable”’, ‘the main advantage was to be with like-minded people, intelligent, clever and friendly’, ‘thoroughly enjoyed meeting other “able” children with similar interests – a revelation, there are others out there!’, ‘the chance to mix with a genuine peer group was invaluable’, ‘she was obviously comfortable mixing with like minded people, and gave her a broader outlook regarding her existing social circle’, and, ‘our son has grown in self-confidence in social situations [and] made new friends who are like him’. The social side of the summer school experience resulted in frequent commentary by parents, second only to issues for their children related to school and summer school. Parents were also clear that their children’s enjoyment of the non-academic side of summer school had had a longer term impact upon their children’s social confidence in general, with 85.7% of parents noting that their child’s social confidence had improved ‘a great deal’, or ‘to some extent’ as a result of summer school attendance (Table 2.18).

**Table 2.18 Parents' responses to: how far has attendance at the summer school improved your child's confidence in social situations?**

	Frequency	%
A great deal	259	41.0
To some extent	282	44.7
Slightly	70	11.1
Not at all	20	3.2
N =	631	

Students also reported that the extensive programme of sports and other evening and weekend activities (with the exception of one site, organised and provided by the summer school Residential Assistants) had increased their willingness to try out new activities on their return home, and to school. However, although the response rate here was high, at 76.2% of students saying that they 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they were more likely to take part in sport and other leisure activities, the level of those who did not agree, at 23.8%, was higher than in the other non-academic indicators (Table 2.19).

**Table 2.19 Students' responses to: please indicate how far you agree with the following statement: attending the summer school has made me feel more confident about taking part in sport and other leisure activities**

	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	186	31.6
Agree	262	44.6
Disagree	119	20.2
Strongly disagree	21	3.6
N =	588	

Students benefited from a wide variety of sporting opportunities at the summer schools, and linked with the successful social atmosphere that was created at the sites, it appeared that this experience had enabled many students to feel more relaxed about being involved in such activities after the summer school. Students commented on this, and frequently linked this benefit with others resulting from their summer school experience noting, for example, 'I feel more able to learn new things, I feel more confident when playing sports and making new friends', 'it's helped me

[...] in making new friends and trying new experiences', 'it has improved my confidence and willingness to try things', and 'I now find it easier to make new friends and feel more comfortable in trying new things'.

### **2.2.2 Friendships**

Perhaps the most salient feature of the summer school experience for the students was the making of friends. This feature of summer school life loomed large for the young people, and 99.7% of the student respondents indicated that they made at least one good friend at summer school (Table 2.19). Further, the evidence is that overwhelming majority of these friendships survive after the summer schools have finished. Students utilised a wide range of techniques – visits to each other's homes, group reunions, text messaging, web based messaging services, and telephone calls – to keep in touch with friends made at summer school. In response to the questionnaire, 95.6% of students indicated that they had kept in touch with at least one friend made at summer school (Table 2.19).

**Table 2.19 Students' responses: summer school and friendships**

Friendships and summer school	Level of agreement (%)			
N = 590	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I made at least one good friend at summer school	86.6	13.1	0.2	0.2
I have kept in contact with at least one friend I met at the summer school	82.2	13.4	3.1	1.4

Parental responses to the post-summer school questionnaire also confirmed, in both the closed and open questions, that friendship forming and maintenance was a key feature of the summer schools for their children, with 80.8% of parents noting that their child had kept in touch with other students from the summer schools 'a great deal' or 'to some extent' (Table 2.20), a figure very close to the 82.2% response of the students.

**Table 2.20 Parents' responses to: how much does your child appear to be keeping in touch with other students from the summer school?**

	Frequency	Percent
A great deal	260	41.2
To some extent	250	39.6
Slightly	81	12.8
Not at all	40	6.3
N =	631	

Both students and parents described these friendships in very positive terms, in some cases indicating that the friendships were of the greatest importance to the well being of the young people. Students found many opportunities for making friends at the summer schools, and were able to benefit from having a network of like-minded friends all around the country after returning home. Student respondents commented, for example, 'socialising with like-minded peers has provided me with a friendship group all over the country from all different backgrounds, which is great', '[I made] lifelong friends, showing me that some people have the same views, same personalities and same needs as me', 'I have made one very good friend who I hope to stay friends with forever', 'I now have lots more friends to talk to on MSN and feel more confident in school', 'I have made many new friends at summer school and I enjoy keeping in contact', '[summer school] gave me a very happy experience at the right time, and a network of good friends (although seeing them costs a lot in train fares)', '[summer school] has enabled me to make some great friends', 'I've made dozens of friends from all sorts of backgrounds and beliefs', and 'the greatest effect of the summer school was the close friends I made and have kept in touch with, and I think the social aspect of summer school is the most important and influential'.

The students' belief that friendship making was one of the key elements of the summer school, and something that, they felt, had a lasting impact, was supported by their parents. Parents described the importance of summer school friends to their children, and gave examples of the ways in which the young people had kept in touch, despite distance problems. For example, parents noted, 'my daughter made a friend from Devon who has just returned having spent 6 days with us in Lancashire', 'our daughter is much more confident in her own abilities and making new friends has been very important', 'she is in contact with her [summer school] friends via e-mail

and text', 'she has made long-lasting friendships from the experience', 'my child has become more mature, independent and benefited greatly from the range of friends she made and keeps in contact with on a regular basis', and 'he has arranged a meeting with 8 friends that he met at summer school (in London, 230 miles away from here!)

A notable number of parents also indicated that, for their children, the opportunity to make like-minded friends had been of particular importance. Parents talked about their children having difficulties in fitting in their schools, or feeling out of place socially. For children like this, being able to meet a peer group where they did feel comfortable was a great gain, and, like almost all the students, they appeared to have been able to maintain those friendships beyond the summer school weeks. Parents highlighted improvements in their children's self-esteem, the sense that there were people they fitted in with, and other important social benefits, for example:

'He made real friends which was fantastic for his self-esteem'.

'Socially very important to have made good friends from all walks of life, friends that she would not have made through normal life, i.e. school'.

'It was wonderful to hear her say that she had met other children just like herself'.

'The whole experience confirmed that there were children with the same interests and values. This has given her the confidence to find out what she wants rather than just accept circumstances'.

'I think it was a relief for him to meet so many like-minded young people and to feel that he fitted in'.

'Suffers a lot of bullying at school, seen as odd/strange, but is zany and offbeat. This was obviously more acceptable to the students he was with at summer school than the wider range he meets in school generally. The students at summer school could see value in parts of his personality that are ridiculed at school. Thank you'.

‘Having time with sparky bright young people of her own calibre has helped put in context the cliquey, trivial attitudes of those at school’.

### **2.3 Contrasts between NAGTY summer school and school**

For many of the students, one of the most notable consequences of their summer school experiences was to throw into relief differences between their experience of education on the summer school and at school. Parents, in particular, identified a range of problems that they felt their children faced at school, issues that were highlighted by the very good experiences that their children had had at the summer schools. Parents frequently noted that their children were dissatisfied with the overall standard of education at their schools, believed that their schools had poor academic standards, that their children were taught by teachers who were indifferent to the requirements of gifted and talented youngsters, that there were social problems at the schools, and that able students faced bullying. These issues were the most frequently commented upon by parents, and were, to a lesser degree, identified as being issues of concern by the students too. Finally, a very small number of school gifted and talented co-ordinators also raised some of these issues.

#### **2.3.1 Returning to schooling**

Parental responses to the questionnaire question, ‘how easy has your child found it to fit in at school again after the experience of the summer school?’, were very positive, with 90.7% of respondents indicating that their child had ‘very easily’, or ‘easily’ fitted into school again (Table 2.21).

**Table 2.21 Parents’ responses to: how easy has your child found it to fit in at school again after the experience of the summer school?**

	Frequency	%
Very easily	358	56.6
Easily	208	32.9
With some difficulty	51	8.1
With much difficulty	7	1.1
Missing	9	1.4
N =	633	

However, responses to the open question indicated that there were difficulties, with more comments being made in which negative aspects of school life were contrasted with positive aspects of the summer school experience than for any other issue raised by parents. The discrepancy between the responses to the closed question on children returning to school, and the open question in which the greatest number of comments were made about problems in the same area, is not easy to reconcile. It may, perhaps, have reflected a sense among some parents that although their child had returned to school quite easily, there were still problems with that schooling.

Some parents made general comments about how their children were dissatisfied with their schools, and often contrasted that position with their children's view of summer school. For example, parents noted that:

'Our son is very bored at school so summer school shows him learning can be exciting'

'He enjoyed the summer school and would do other NAGTY activities. It has not made it any easier to fit in at school and he says he doesn't care about that'.

'Her school had little interest in NAGTY so a lot of potential good has been wasted. Last year she found it particularly difficult returning to school, but she has now changed schools which has helped a great deal'.

'She benefited hugely by being with like minded pupils and is excited about uni[versity]. Sadly, she found it horrible back at school where there is peer pressure to "dumb down" and "fit in" which was made worse by her happy experience at [summer school]'.

'She very much enjoys the summer school and can't wait to go, but it does make "normal" school quite uninspiring'.

'School had been a very unhappy place for my daughter, on her NAGTY course she felt valued and stimulated. She also found other like-minded students'.

'He was able to relax amongst like minded people. He returned a calm, happy pleasant young man, and loving too. Then ... school started again'.

'Excuse the cynicism, but NAGTY summer school is the only education he gets that meets his needs. Most of the schooling he has been sat on, i.e., positively discouraged from reaching his potential. NAGTY has probably kept him in schooling. Although NAGTY is the best of the education he receives it cannot compensate for his very poor experiences of school'.

There were a large number of such comments made by parents, and some parents wrote extensive pieces on problems that both they and their children had faced in connection with daily schooling. A small, but notable, number of parents wrote about what they saw as schools attempting to obstruct their children applying for NAGTY membership, and/or NAGTY summer school places. An example of this are given in figure 2.1

**Figure 2.1 A parent's experience of a school's obstructionism with regard to NAGTY**

The school which is reasonably well performing did not make it very easy for my child to be identified as gifted. I felt obstructed by the teacher specifically allocated the duty of seeing to gifted children. I was asked why I wanted him to join and if my child agreed or if it was just me. I was put off and embarrassed by their attitude. I was told there were other children just like him, it didn't mean he was eligible to join the academy.

Finally I arranged for him to do the mensa test, and not only did he get in, but he scored very highly. He then joined the academy on the basis of that (no help from the school).

When requesting funds for summer school, I again experienced similar obstructions, that they spend all money on all children equally. The contribution was small and I was told that no one else had ever made such a request.

Some parents also described situations where their child's experience of summer school had, for the first time, been a happy experience of a learning environment. In a few cases, the positive impact of the NAGTY summer school was of great

importance, and threw into dramatic relief the negative experience of normal schooling; a particularly moving example is given in figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2 A contrast between the experience of NAGTY summer school and school.**

She felt and still feels to some extent that her teachers do not take her seriously. She has an uneasy relationship with both her peers and teachers. This has led to fairly severe mental health problems including withdrawal and self harm for which she continues to receive psychiatric help. This summer she met [at summer school] people who think like she does, some of whom have had the experiences she has had. She no longer feels that she is the only child who cannot cope with the constraints of a rigid and inflexible school system and has learnt many ways of coping with these problems. She has grown in confidence and has been more assertive. She feels that her teachers see her as confrontational and we feel as a family that many of her teachers cannot cope with a child who always asks “too many questions”. We know that the school system has to cope with children and young people of all abilities and her needs are not always met. NAGTY has given her the opportunity to express herself more freely. It has shown her that she is not alone. Since summer school she has not self harmed and the support she needs from the mental health has greatly reduced.

Sorry if this is such a long answer but I cannot express how much this has meant to my daughter and to us as a family. No one in our family has ever been to university and our daughter has all of our love and support but we cannot even begin to understand what she has been through. Thank you for providing the chance for her to be able to meet like minded people and to learn that she is not alone.

This account dealt with a number of issues relating to the child’s experience of school and summer school – issues concerned with teachers’ responses to an able child, the inflexibility of schooling, and social isolation.

Only a small minority of the student respondents mentioned problems with school that matched the concerns brought up by many of their parents. The young people were far more likely to concentrate on the positive experiences of summer school, rather than negative aspects of school. When they did mention their normal schooling, they were most likely to do so in terms of it being ‘boring’ in comparison

with summer school. Typical examples of their commentary were: 'because it was so amazing, by comparison my school seems drab and boring', 'I now think that school lessons are boring because summer school "lessons" were so interesting', 'the only downside is that school now seems *extremely* boring compared to the fun learning at [summer school]', 'I decided to go on a summer school as I was getting bored with the people and lessons in school. At the summer school the teaching and pupils were even better than I had hoped, but on returning to school it is even worse by comparison!', and 'once again, NAGTY has made normal school seem boring!'. In addition, there were some other comments relating to social isolation at school, and feelings of not finding the atmosphere at school conducive to learning, for example:

'I am not encouraged/supported at my current high school so the experience of working with other like-minded students [at summer school] was a fantastic opportunity',

'Sometimes it makes it hard to go back to school working with pupils who clearly don't want to be there and do their utmost to disrupt those who want to work'.

'Although I was fortunate to make many long lasting friendships [at summer school], I feel that I am being ostracised by original peers for being a member of NAGTY'.

'Having been at summer school, I feel even more estranged from my peers than I did previously. The summer school had a negative impact on my enjoyment of learning at school after I became used to discussing the subjects with professionals and being treated as a mature individual'.

The sense that some NAGTY students have to take care about how they present membership of the academy to their school peers was also reinforced by comments made to fieldworkers by students during the summer school, notes on questionnaires (again, particularly by parents), and responses to the open questions. Frequently, students avoid telling their peers that they are in NAGTY, or that they have attended a summer school. This issue may well explain the parental response to the question, 'how have other pupils in your child's school reacted to your child being identified as gifted and talented?' (Table 2.22).

**Table 2.22 Parents' responses to: how have other pupils in your child's school reacted to your child being identified as gifted and talented?**

	Frequency	%
Positively	105	16.6
Mainly positively	211	33.3
Mixed reaction	198	31.3
Mainly negative	28	4.4
Negatively	5	0.8
Missing	86	13.6
N =	633	

### **2.3.2 Concern about academic standards at school**

In addition to general concerns about the contrast between their children's normal schooling and the experience of summer school, parents also highlighted specific issues that concerned them. Foremost among these issues was a concern that the school that their child attended could not provide the level of academic education that parents felt that their child needed. Some parents contrasted their child's excitement and enjoyment with learning at the summer school, with their sense of frustration at the academic level of school. Parents appeared to be concerned that schools were unable to enable the children to continue the progress they had made at the summer school, and, more generally, with academic standards across the board. For example, parents commented:

'The positive experience of summer school has made him even more aware of the shortcomings of his school education: teaching, structural organisation and management. Sees his school as failing to meet his needs'.

'He greatly enjoyed taking science well beyond what is done at school, it stimulated his enthusiasm for learning. However, he continues to find school science slow and dull'.

'A negative point is that she has become more critical of her teachers as they don't match up to the [summer school] ones'.

'She feels she is being held back at school now, as the style of teaching is so different and "thinking outside of the box" is not actively encouraged. For the first two weeks back at school she continued with her "forward thinking" and was positive about her lessons, but after that short period she has now fallen back to the class level, and although she is predicted to do extremely well in her GCSEs, I believe there is a side to her that was briefly brought out at NAGTY summer school and that has now been suppressed at school'.

'Our daughter has learnt that she is able to cope with a higher level of work than she thought she was possible of, which has meant she now wants to do a higher level of work at school, which is not supported by the school'.

Some of the points made by the parents indicated a high level of dissatisfaction with schooling for able children. Although such views were in the minority, they were not infrequent, and were sometimes expressed in strong terms, perhaps indicating wider dissatisfaction with the state of provision for gifted and talented young people; for example:

'NAGTY summer schools are superb but cannot compensate for the rest of their education which is appalling. Young gifted students will continue to suffer sorely whilst their needs are disregarded in schools. Parents who dare speak out for their children invariably aren't listened to, are often mocked and are treated equally appallingly'.

'The school has too much power in this process. If parents are not vigilant their children may not even be notified about summer school. The schools can refuse to recommend a child and the parents not know, let alone have a chance to put another case'.

'I honestly feel [...] that clever children are just as much a "thorn in the side" of the average school environment as troublesome or disruptive children. The only teacher who is aware that our daughter attended summer school is her history teacher, we gave him a copy of her NAGTY report and he was very positive. I would have liked the school to acknowledge in some way that you sent them a copy of the report, but the two attempts to contact them have been unsuccessful'.

‘At primary school, gifted and talented is often viewed by many teachers in derisive, critical terms – they jump at every opportunity to criticise and mock labelled children or challenge their ability. As a Teaching Assistant I have observed this at first hand. It is very sad’.

In a very small number of cases, dissatisfaction with school, and the feeling, acquired from summer school, that education could be better, has led to changes of school, and, in at least one case, a withdrawal from the schooling system in favour of home education. One parent said: ‘my daughter had been somewhat dissatisfied with her school before going to [summer school]. On her return [to school] she was so dissatisfied that she contacted a private school and has won a 50% scholarship to start immediately!’

### ***2.3.3 Isolation at school***

There was concern expressed by some parents that their children found it difficult, in social terms, at school. This concern was usually contrasted with the socially positive experiences of the NAGTY students at the summer schools. In a small number of cases, the experience of successfully integrating into summer school life had led to a pronounced increase in the self-esteem of young people with social problems at school. Typical comments by parents included:

‘Our son now knows all his hard work is worthwhile. He often feels isolated in school, now he’s met lots of other clever children in the same position. A big confidence and self-esteem booster’.

‘It has made her aware that she is not unusual in her keenness to learn. Having like minded friends [from summer school] has been a real boost for her confidence and made her sure of her chosen career path’.

‘She has always had difficulty socialising with her peers. She really appreciated summer school for the ease with which she made friends as well as for the exciting course that she took’.

For some of the NAGTY students the experience of successfully socialising, and of being valued, at summer school, was a life-changing experience. For some children, summer school appeared to be their first experience of being accepted, which

boosted their self-esteem, and gave them greater confidence in handling social situations back at their own schools. Some parents reported that the impact of a very positive summer school experience was of central importance to their child's mental well being (figure 2.3).

**Figure 2.3 Two parental accounts of life-changing socialising at summer school**

- i) Our daughter has always found it difficult to fit in at school. She has always been very bright, has on the whole been ignored by her teachers and regarded as a “problem” child. She has been badly bullied by other children. The first summer school she attended [...] in 2004 rescued her from her depression and very low self-esteem, she was a different child when she returned. She felt appreciated and valued by others for the first time outside the home. It helped her immeasurably. Thank you NAGTY!
- ii) Before the summer school, my daughter was unhappy at school. She had only one friend – a little girl with Down’s syndrome. She described herself as a “geek” and “too weird for anyone normal to like”, coupled with fantasies about herself as a sort of genius (which she isn’t!). She came back from the camp thinking of herself as likeable, with her abilities in far better perspective. She has since sought out a little group of eccentric friends at her school – who call themselves “the swot club”, and is thoroughly enjoying school. She retains her friendship with the little girl with Down’s syndrome in her form but has given up any attempt to please the children in her form otherwise – and has been far better accepted by them as a result. Thank you for what you have done for my child!

**2.3.4 Teachers’ reactions to NAGTY membership and to students’ summer school experiences**

In response to the questionnaire enquiry about the reaction of adults at NAGTY students’ schools to the young people being identified as gifted and talented, a large majority (70.8%) or parent respondents indicated that there had been a ‘positive’ or ‘mainly positive’ response. Nonetheless, some 15.3% recorded other reactions, and

13.9% did not respond to the question, presumably from lack of knowledge (Table 2.23).

**Table 2.23 Parents’ responses to: how have adults in your child’s school reacted to your child being identified as gifted and talented?**

	Frequency	%
Positively	267	42.2
Mainly positively	181	28.6
Mixed reaction	83	13.1
Mainly negative	3	0.5
Negatively	11	1.7
Missing	88	13.9
N =	633	

A minority of respondents also made comments about what they perceived as being the indifference of teachers or schools to their children’s membership of NAGTY and/opt to their children’s summer school experiences. For example, parents noted that:

‘Our school shows no interest in more able pupils – hence our delight in having NAGTY available. [Teachers] have shown no reaction at all’.

‘There is a minimal gifted and talented programme at school (a large comprehensive). Therefore wide spectrum of abilities [...] the school has been indifferent to my suggestions that they should make use of outside help such as NAGTY, and we are late in involving our son as a result of “going it alone”’.

‘It changed her to a great extent. She came back more independent and very eager for a good university life. Little recognition or response from any adults in her school’.

The only negative aspect was that the college [the child’s school] showed little interest other than recording her visit {summer school} in the news letter. No

teachers asked her about it. I wonder if they feel that the label “gifted and talented” is too exclusive’.

### ***2.3.5 Gifted and Talented related bullying at school***

A small number of parent respondents identified bullying at school as an issue that was related to their children being gifted and talented, members of NAGTY, or attendance at NAGTY summer schools. Although this was very much a minority experience, the problem was clearly a distressing one for the children and parents involved. Accounts of bullying in this respect related the problems that gifted and talented children experience if they show too much interest in learning at school. For example:

‘Our daughter has just two close girl friends at school and although her school reports say she’s a popular member of her class, she generally keeps a low profile. She has learnt that participating in class attracts attention which would make her susceptible to bullying – so she never does’.

‘It also helped him to be with others of a like ability [at the summer school] who had played no part in his past where he has been picked on and teased for being clever’.

‘She has been subjected to bullying due to being bright, but by mixing with like-minded kids she seems to be letting comments wash over her’.

‘Our daughter has always found it difficult to fit in at school. She has always been very bright, has on the whole been ignored by her teachers and regarded as a “problem” child. She has been badly bullied by other children’.

When talking about bullying at school, parents often contrasted their children’s negative experiences at school with their positive experiences of summer school. There was also a sense that their children’s realisation that there were like-minded peers in the wider community helped children to deal with academic related bullying on their return to school.

### 3. ISSUES RELATED TO SUMMER SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Two areas of concern emerged from the data gathered following the summer schools. Although the majority of parents indicated that they were satisfied with the report they received about their child's performance at summer school, there was a notable minority that expressed serious reservations about the reporting process. There were concerns about the failure to receive a report, reports that were seen to be too formulaic and generalised, and reports that did not help their children to build on their strengths. The reporting question also featured quite strongly in the feedback received from gifted and talented co-ordinators at students' schools, with similar concerns being expressed by teachers as by parents. It would seem, therefore, that some tightening up needs to be undertaken with respect to the reporting process.

School gifted and talented co-ordinators also raised a number of issues that were of particular concern to them, from funding and administrative questions to issues connected with the identity and role of NAGTY. In the minds of some co-ordinators, there was a lack of clarity about aspects of the summer school programme.

#### 3.1 Reporting issues

In response to the questionnaire closed question that concerned overall satisfaction with the summer school report, 88% of parental respondents indicated that they were 'a great deal' or 'to some extent' satisfied with the report they received (Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1 Parents' responses to: to what extent were you satisfied with the report you received about your child's performance at the summer school?**

	Frequency	%
A great deal	339	53.6
To some extent	209	33.0
Slightly	52	8.2
Not at all	23	3.6
Missing	10	1.6
N =	633	

However, responses to two other questions that referred to the summer school reports indicated that the picture was more complex than table 3.1 might have suggested, with declining numbers of parents indicating that the report was useful in terms of enabling their children to become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses (Table 3.2), or as an aid to improve academic performance at school (Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2 Parents' views on the applicability of the summer school reports**

Applicability of the summer school report	Level of agreement (%)				
	A great deal	To some extent	Slightly	Not at all	Missing
N = 633					
To what extent has the report enabled your child to become more aware of their strengths/weaknesses?	24.6	46.8	17.4	9.2	2.1
To what extent has your child been able to use the report to help their academic performance at school?	9.6	35.1	25.6	25.6	4.1

Although 53.6% of parent respondents indicated that they were 'a great deal' satisfied with the report, only 24.6% were similarly satisfied with the report in relation to it being useful for their child in terms of their understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and an even smaller percentage, only 9.6%, indicated that they were equally satisfied with the report in terms of its usefulness in helping their child with their academic performance at school. Some of the latter figure may be explicable in

terms of the perceived division between the experience of school and summer school, something that was apparent in the remainder of parents', and some students' feedback. However, some of the explanation for the low level of approval, which was shared, to a lesser extent, in terms of the usefulness of the report as an indicator of strengths and weaknesses, probably lay in the reports themselves. Interestingly, the response of gifted and talented co-ordinators to the question of summer school feedback was, generally, positive, with 72.8% of co-ordinators agreeing that useful feedback was provided (Table 3.3).

**Table 3.3 Gifted and talented co-ordinators' responses to: useful feedback was provided [to schools] on students by the NAGTY summer schools they attended**

	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	84	32.2
Agree	106	40.6
Disagree	12	4.6
Strongly disagree	24	9.2
Don't know	23	8.8
Missing	12	4.6
N =	261	

Nonetheless, those gifted and talented co-ordinators who were not satisfied with the summer school reports, had no information about the reports (suggesting that, in some cases, at least, they might not have received them), or did not respond to the question, amounted to 27.2% of the 261 co-ordinators who responded. This is a fairly sizeable minority, and reporting problems were the second most frequent issue to be raised by co-ordinators (after funding issues) in the open questions. Some co-ordinators had received good feedback about the summer schools from students involved, but no reports: 'students were very positive about the summer school and are keen to return again! If there is feedback available from the summer schools, I would appreciate a look at it', 'the reports were very useful. Could we receive a copy as well as the students?', 'we have no records of who has applied, been accepted and attended – no reports were received this year', 'I would have liked feedback – all I received was what I asked the students about. I would have appreciated it directly, with suggestions and advice'. There was an awareness that the failure to ensure that reports were received by gifted and talented co-ordinators was undermining the

potentially positive impact of summer school attendance in the longer term; one co-ordinator noted:

‘Clearer feedback and lines of communication between NAGTY and school gifted and talented co-ordinators is urgently required. The only feedback that I have received has been via students’ anecdotal accounts’.

Other co-ordinators were concerned about the late arrival of reports, with a typical comment here being, ‘reports received by me on 31/10/05 this year – an hour or so after I had received the [CEDAR questionnaire]. Is there any way of speeding things up?’

Some gifted and talented co-ordinators who had received reports were concerned about the reports on a number of levels, and a small number of these teachers were extremely critical of the reports they had seen, for example, two different co-ordinators commented:

‘I have contacted NAGTY because all four reports concerning students we sent to Summer Schools this year contained errors of spelling, punctuation and in one case, a change of Christian name part way through. Unless there is a system for checking these [sic] is implemented before they are circulated, I think a poor impression will be made’.

‘The report back for the student had the *wrong* name on and the last paragraph talked about a boy called Jonathan – she was a *girl!* Very disappointing – simple checking and not using macros might help!’

The students’ response to their reports was more positive overall than was the gifted and talented co-ordinators’, or the parents’ response. On the three questions asked, the students rated the usefulness of the reports at over 85% in each case (Table 3.4), as 91.1% of student respondents indicated that they found the report ‘very helpful’, or ‘helpful’ in terms of their performance at the summer school; 85.1% said that they found their report ‘very helpful’ or ‘helpful’ in terms of suggestions for further reading; and 85.6% indicated that their report was ‘very helpful’ or ‘helpful’ in terms of understanding their strengths and weaknesses. This is a different picture than that given by parents and gifted and talented co-ordinators, but, from the total absence of

any other comments about the reports by the students, it can, in all probability, be assumed that they were both satisfied with them, and/or that the reports were not the most salient feature of the summer school experience for the students.

**Table 3.4 Student reactions to summer school reports**

How did you find your report in terms of:	Level of agreement (%)				
	Very helpful	Helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very unhelpful	Missing
N = 590					
Your performance at summer school	38.3	52.8	7.4	1.5	0.8
Suggestions for further learning	36.4	48.6	12.4	2.6	1.4
Understanding your strengths & weaknesses	35.7	49.9	12.0	2.4	1.2

More detail about perceived reporting inadequacies was provided by parents in their responses to the open question. Parents complained of not receiving reports, receiving reports that were lacking in specific details about their children, or reports that gave little or no indication as to how their children might build upon their summer school experiences. Reporting problems were a strong issue for a notable minority of parents. Example comments included:

‘The academic report said far more about its writer than our son and served no useful purpose whatsoever for our son’.

‘The report was mainly descriptive of what she did. It made no reference to her strengths or weaknesses’.

‘I feel that the Final Report does not adequately cover the volume, level of intensity of the work undertaken by the students. As such, these Reports do

not convey the total NAGTY experience to those outside that group with the experience of it – for example, teachers’.

‘The Report seemed general and not personal at all’.

‘The report was very wordy, very vague, not a professional report. It was so non-specific it was meaningless, even if it was very positive’.

Despite these parental reservations concerning the reporting process, it should be noted that of all the issues that parents raised in connection with the summer schools, reporting was the least frequently covered.

### ***3.2 Issues raised by the gifted and talented co-ordinators***

#### ***3.2.1 Schools and gifted and talented pupils***

Gifted and talented co-ordinators indicated that their schools provided high levels of support for gifted and talented pupils (89.8%), that their schools had provided good support to those students who applied to NAGTY summer school in 2005 (91.8%), and that their schools were likely to be similarly supportive in future years to NAGTY students applying to summer school (95.2%. All Table 3.5).

**Table 3.5 Gifted and Talented co-ordinators' views of school support for G&T and NAGTY pupils**

School support	Level of agreement (%)					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Missing
N = 261						
School provides high level of support for G&T pupils	26.1	58.6	8.8	-	0.8	5.7
School provided good support to summer school applicants 2005	34.1	51.3	5.0	0.5	2.3	6.9
School will provide good support for summer school applicants in future years	54.8	37.2	1.1	0.8	2.7	3.4

Despite the high levels of engagement with gifted and talented issues, particularly with pupils and the NAGTY summer schools, the gifted and talented co-ordinators nonetheless reported that summer school attendance by their pupils had, in almost half the school's cases (45.9%), raised the profile of gifted and talented issues in the schools (Table 3.6).

**Table 3.6 Gifted and talented co-ordinators' responses to: the school is more aware of gifted and talented issues as a result of its students' attendance at the NAGTY summer school**

	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	27	10.3
Agree	93	35.6
Disagree	92	35.2
Strongly disagree	13	5.0
Don't know	24	9.2
Missing	12	4.6
N =	261	

In addition, some co-ordinators wanted to see improved communication between NAGTY and schools about NAGTY pupils in the schools. A variety of comments were made here, but all addressing the theme of communication:

'It would be helpful if a list was sent to schools before the summer school of girls who had been accepted. The feedback forms were not received until a few weeks into the term – they were not addressed to the G&T co-ordinator, but went to the head'.

'It would be very useful to have a Termly compilation of all our registered students and a single list of all those participating in each session of the summer schools and other events'.

'NAGTY membership is difficult to track – we give our pupils the application forms which they complete if they wish (and I strongly encourage them to do so)'.

'We didn't know that [name] had attended this summer school, or how he came to be registered with NAGTY!'

'Regular summative updates of which students are actually members of NAGTY would be appreciated. More advance notice of events (in paper format) would be useful too'.

A very small minority of gifted and talented co-ordinator respondents did, nevertheless, appear to be unclear about some aspects of NAGTY, its role and relationship with schools, and, to some extent, CEDAR. There was some confusion in the minds of a small number of co-ordinators between NAGTY and CEDAR. This arose from the siting of both bodies at the University of Warwick, and manifested itself as co-ordinators directing questions to CEDAR about NAGTY matters. There might be an issue of brand name strength here. In addition, one or two teachers were unclear as to the scope of NAGTY, an example being the statement, 'NAGTY seems to see itself in an OSTED role. Heaven help us!'.

### ***3.2.2 Schools and summer school funding***

The most salient issue raised by gifted and talented co-ordinators in respect to the summer schools concerned funding. This was seen by many co-ordinators as being the main problem when schools were faced with applications by their pupils to attend summer schools. Schools were either in a position where they had no funds available to support pupils' attendance at summer school, or were unwilling to devote funds to one or two pupils which it was felt could be better employed for a large number of children. These two points were made by a notable group of co-ordinators:

'There is no specific funding in our school, so students who apply/attend summer schools have to meet the whole cost'.

'Although we love our students to go to the summer schools we cannot give them any subsidy towards the cost. It's infuriating!'.

'Whilst we acknowledge the benefits that students may have in attending Summer School, it is difficult to find £270 to support one student. It is more likely that this money could be used to benefit a higher number of students'.

'We met the cost this time. Budget constraints may mean we cannot in future'.

'Funding is still an issue. None of our parents are willing to part fund summer schools and the figure does seem quite high for a school to spend on a few students'.

In some cases, it appeared that the funding issue led to the school not advertising the NAGTY summer schools among its pupils. This may particularly be the case where the school has a number of eligible pupils, which potentially meant that they would have to make choices about which NAGTY pupil was to be supported and which would receive no financial support from the school. An example was given by a gifted and talented co-ordinator from a grammar school:

‘In a grammar school where a large proportion of students are members of NAGTY, the Head is not happy for summer schools to be pushed as your leaflets commit the school to financial help. The school has no way of giving financial help, and we simply get parents enquiring for financial help and have to be told it isn’t available. In the last two years I have managed to get some funding from county, but that’s only through persistence and managing to ask at the right time. Very few of our students go to summer schools because we don’t give out your publicity. At the time of booking, county won’t commit themselves to financial help for that summer’.

## **4. NAGTY SUMMER SCHOOLS – AN OVERALL SUCCESS**

The evidence of the follow-up work was that the very high levels of satisfaction with the summer schools experience expressed by the NAGTY students during and at the end of the summer schools themselves was maintained in the following months. Parents and students were clear that they regarded the summer school experience as being a valuable one, with notable gains accruing to summer school participants in academic, social, and friendship terms. These gains were seen to be beneficial beyond the confines of the summer schools themselves, and, for some of the young people the summer schools proved to be, in their own words, life-changing. As a result, there was a widespread desire among the NAGTY summer school students to return to summer school in future years, a desire that was also reflected in the evidence provided by their parents.

### ***4.1 A valuable experience***

Both parents and students were keen to stress that the summer school experience was a very valuable one. This was not a notable issue for gifted and talented coordinators, who had other, usually more administrative concerns (such as funding and reporting) foremost in their minds. The young people and their parents mirrored their enthusiasm for the summer school programme, and highlighted academic, social, and friendship gains. For example, students commented:

‘I think that it has provided me with the best 3 weeks of my life, learning and socializing. It has also made me loads of new friends and a better understanding of maths’.

‘The most worthwhile experience ever. Helped me increase in self confidence unbelievably. Best experience in the world. Make it go on longer!’

‘I feel more confident in speaking to new people my own age and able to make friends more easily. My school work has improved to a great extent and I learnt a lot about creative writing that I continue to use in my work’.

'It has made me a much happier person. I feel inspired to go on to do greater things with my life. I have made many friends for life. It was fab. Please let me go again!'

'Summer school was one of the most valuable and worthwhile experiences of my life. Not only have I made more friends, feel more independent, I have been given the opportunity to explore deeper into the world of science and have a taste of university life'.

These comments are typical of the view of the overwhelming majority of the student respondents. The sense that attendance at a NAGTY summer school was a highlight of students' lives is very strong in the testimonies of the NAGTY students. They were quick to reaffirm the opinion of student respondents at the summer schools that the experience is highly valued by them, and, on return to normal schooling, often proved to be of continuing value. This appreciation was also reported by the parents and guardians of the NAGTY students. Parents' comments include, for example:

'It has boosted her confidence in many ways, it was a great experience as she developed more self-esteem and couldn't stop talking about it for weeks afterwards'.

'We are very grateful that he was given this opportunity – he has greatly benefited from the experience and it will inform the choices he will make about his future studies'.

'She is more confident and self assured – she finds problem solving easier as she sums up pros and cons of situations presented to her'.

'Increased confidence in her own abilities, both socially and academically. Participation in class [at the summer school] was reacted to in a positive manner by peers and teaching staff, something that is not the pattern in normal school life'.

'Our son has gained so much confidence, independence and his general ability to socialise has improved. He has made some great friends, and is keeping in contact via e-mail MSN messenger'.

'It is the only thing he has been positive about for *years* (really!). His first words when we collected him were, "Can I go again next summer – I don't care what course it is". This is not a glib reaction in the excitement of the event – it was a relief to him to be able to work at a different level'.

These comments were typical of parental views concerning the impact of the summer school on their children. It was not unusual for parents to say, 'I cannot praise the summer school enough', and link praise with accounts of the wide variety of, apparently lasting benefits their children had obtained from summer school attendance.

#### ***4.2 A life-changing experience***

It was not infrequent to find children describing the summer school experience as being 'life-changing', a phrase that was often used. A typical student comments were:

'Yet again Summer School has had a life changing effect on me. I loved it. Socially and intellectually. What an amazing experience'.

'The summer school has had a huge impact on my life, and I thank everyone there for making it such a marvellous experience. However clichéd it sounds, the summer school has truly changed my life'.

This was supported by some parents, who also talked about the experience in similar terms:

'Our son found the summer school a very rewarding, and a positively life-changing experience. We have never seen him so enthusiastic and inspired'.

Other parents gave detailed, and, sometimes, moving, accounts of the impact that summer school attendance had had on their children; experiences of summer school that had been life-changing in quite dramatic ways:

'The pastoral care was *superb*. My daughter has Aspergers Syndrome, and the support they gave her (without her knowing) enabled her to come out of herself and really join in everything. She came home *transformed* – confident, self assured, relaxed. She made some wonderful friends and still talks to one

in particular every night, and has not lost her new bubbly confidence. I cannot praise the staff enough – [staff name] especially was absolutely wonderful. I could highly recommend [site] summer school to anyone, their child would be in very safe hands and have the most amazing experience’.

A few parents of students with disabilities expressed similar thanks for the ways in which their children had been fully included in the summer schools, enabling them to greatly benefit from the experience. For example:

‘I cannot thank everyone enough for the care and attention given to my daughter during her stay. That care, attention and consideration made the experience a level playing field it has given her the confidence to think positively about a future at university and that even with a disability it is possible to become independent and to become a valued member of society’.

The capacity of the summer schools to help boost the self-esteem of vulnerable young people was noted earlier (with the case of the self-harming child being a notable example), and this, coupled with academic, socialising, and friendship gains made the experience a lastingly positive one for almost all the participants.

#### ***4.3 Further involvement with NAGTY and the summer schools***

Attendance at a NAGTY summer school increased, according to evidence from parents and students, the desire of the students to both attend other NAGTY events, and to take a further summer school in the future. Some 90.5% of parent respondents indicated that their children’s attendance at summer school had increased their desire to ‘a great extent’, or ‘to some extent’, to attend other NAGTY events (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1 Parents’ responses to: in your view, has attending the summer school increased your child’s desire to become involved with other NAGTY activities?**

	Frequency	%
A great deal	374	59.5
To some extent	195	31.0
Slightly	52	8.3
Not at all	8	1.3
N =	631	

The high positive response to this question may well be taken as a further indicator of the success of the summer schools in terms of the entire range of NAGTY’s student-based activities. Similarly, parents showed a high level of willingness for further summer school experiences, with 97.6% of parental respondents indicating that their children would benefit from attending another NAGTY summer school – 83.3% feeling that their children would benefit ‘a great deal’ from further summer school attendance (Table 4.2):

**Table 4.2 Parents’ responses to: to what extent do you think your child would benefit from attending another NAGTY summer school?**

	Frequency	%
A great deal	527	83.3
To some extent	81	12.8
Slightly	13	2.1
Not at all	2	0.3
Missing	10	1.6
N =	633	

Again, these figures show a very high parental endorsement of the perceived benefits of the summer school experience for their children. However, if a desire to attend another summer school can be seen as the young people’s endorsement of the experience, then they viewed that experience even more positively than their parents, as 98.8% of student respondents indicated that they may well want to attend another NAGTY summer school (Table 4.3)

**Table 4.3 Students' responses to: would you like to attend another NAGTY summer school?**

	Frequency	%
Yes	497	84.5
Maybe	84	14.3
No	7	1.2
N =	588	

These figures were given further emphasis by the even greater positive response that students gave to the questionnaire question, 'looking back, how worthwhile has the summer school experience been to you personally?'. Some 99.7% of student respondents felt that the summer school experience had been worthwhile (Table 4.4); a remarkable endorsement of the summer schools by the NAGTY students.

**Table 4.4 Students' responses to: looking back, how worthwhile has the summer school experience been to you personally?**

	Frequency	%
Very worthwhile	506	85.9
Worthwhile	81	13.8
Not very worthwhile	1	0.2
Not at all worthwhile	1	0.2
N =	589	

Both parents and students overwhelmingly regarded the summer school experience as being a success. As a result, some parents reported that other children, on hearing about the NAGTY students' experiences, had expressed interest in attending NAGTY events and summer schools in future; for example:

'All in all, we judge the outcomes of our child's experience to be wholly positive. We note with interest that several of her peers at school are now expressing an interest in attending future NAGTY events and summer schools, largely as a result of her enthusiastic accounts of her experiences'.

In this context, the concern of many former summer school students is that they will not be able to gain a place on future summer schools, either for financial or other

reasons. This fear was also reflected in parental feedback, where concerns about finances were voiced:

‘She is very upset that we cannot afford to send her again, distribution of funds at the school is divided equally whether or not the pupils want to or do attend summer schools or residential, there were some funds were not used. This is unreasonable distribution of funds’.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The third, and final, part of CEDAR's evaluation of the NAGTY Summer Schools, 2005, has shown that, in terms of the longer term impact of the summer school experience, it can be regarded as a highly successful programme. With high levels of response to the questionnaires (in the order of 63% of parents, 59% of students and 42% of gifted and talented co-ordinators) which formed the core of the data gathered, it was apparent that the positive picture that emerged of the impact was one that would be recognised by the overwhelming majority of respondents.

Students and parents were, on the whole, clear that the experience of a NAGTY summer school conferred lasting academic and social benefits that NAGTY students took back with them into their normal school lives. In addition, students made important friendships at summer school that they were able to maintain after the end of the summer school. For some of the students, the social and personal gains made as a result of summer school attendance were of great importance, and were not infrequently described, by students and parents, as being life-changing. In addition, the perception that NAGTY summer schools offered a partial view into the world of university study and life acted as an additional spur for many students in their desire to attend university in future.

There were a number of issues that were identified, largely by parents and gifted and talented co-ordinators, that related to the impact of the summer schools. There was concern expressed by a minority of parents and co-ordinators that the reporting process from summer schools to parents and schools had not worked effectively, that reports had not appeared, or were inadequate. In addition, co-ordinators were sometimes concerned by what they felt was a lack of good communications between NAGTY and schools. There was also a concern about the problem that funding NAGTY students' attendance at summer schools caused many schools. This was the most salient issue raised by co-ordinators.

The main negative impact of the summer school experience, identified by a notable minority of parent respondents in particular, with some support from student evidence, concerned the feeling that the overwhelmingly positive educational experience of the summer schools was not replicated by schools. Some parents were particularly critical of what they saw as the failings of the school system to

provide for gifted and talented youngsters, a failing that had been, for them, thrown into sharp relief by the very success of the NAGTY summer school programme.

## APPENDIX

### The post summer school questionnaires



#### NATIONAL ACADEMY FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED YOUTH (NAGTY) SUMMER SCHOOL EXPERIENCE 2005

#### Post Summer School teacher questionnaire

**To: Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator**

This questionnaire should only take a couple of minutes. Please return in the reply paid envelope.

Please tick one box only for each item.

Thank you in anticipation.

#### 1. Impact of NAGTY Summer School attendance

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
a) Useful feedback was provided on students by the NAGTY Summer Schools that they attended.					
b) Students who attended a NAGTY Summer School feel that they had a good educational experience.					
c) Students who attended a NAGTY Summer school have improved learning skills as a result of the experience.					
d) Students who attended a NAGTY Summer School have improved social skills as a result of the experience.					
e) Other school students are positive about those of their peers who attended the NAGTY Summer Schools.					
f) The school is more aware of gifted and talented issues as a result of its students' attendance at the NAGTY Summer Schools.					
g) The school is likely to be supportive of students who wish to attend NAGTY Summer Schools in future years.					

**2. School support for gifted and talented students**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
a) The school provides a high level of support for gifted and talented students.					
b) The school provides good support to those students who applied to the NAGTY summer school in 2005.					

**3. Please outline any additional points you wish to make in connection with gifted and talented students, NAGTY, NAGTY Summer Schools, or other relevant issues.**

.....

.....

.....

**NATIONAL ACADEMY FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED YOUTH  
SUMMER SCHOOL EXPERIENCE 2005**

**Post Summer School student questionnaire**

**Reflections on the Learning Experience**

1. Now you have been back at school for a while, how do you rate the level of impact of the summer school in terms of the following:

	High impact	Medium impact	Low impact	No impact
a) Improving your ability to solve problems?				
b) Improving your ability to work on your own?				
c) Adding knowledge that you have been able to use at school?				
d) Improving your ability to learn more effectively at school?				
e) Increasing your enjoyment of learning at school?				

2. Now you have been back at school for a while, how far has attending the summer school improved your self-confidence in terms of:

	To a great extent	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at all
a) Written work?				
b) Speaking in class?				
c) Practical work in class?				
d) Working with your peers?				

3. How did you find your report from the summer school in terms of:

	Very helpful	Helpful	Somewhat unhelpful	Very unhelpful
a) Your performance at the summer school?				
b) The suggestions for further learning?				
c) Understanding your strengths and weaknesses?				

### Reflecting on the Social Experience

4. Please indicate how far you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) I made at least one good friend at the summer school.				
b) I have kept in contact with at least one friend I met at the summer school.				
c) Attending the summer school has made socializing at school easier for me.				
d) Attending the summer school has made me feel more confident about taking part in sport and other leisure activities.				

### Reflecting on the Residential Experience

5. Please indicate how far you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) Being away from home was a valuable experience for me.				
b) Spending 2/3 weeks away from home has made me feel more independent.				
c) I feel more confident about being away from home in the future.				

**Reflecting on the Overall Experience**

6. Looking back, how worthwhile has the summer school experience been to you personally?

Very Worthwhile	Worthwhile	Not very worthwhile	Not at all worthwhile

7. a) Did you attend a NAGTY summer school in 2002,2003 or 2004?  
Yes  No

b) Would you like to attend another NAGTY summer school?  
Yes  Maybe  No

8. Please tell us what effect/s you feel that the summer school has had on your life.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your views on the summer school are important. Please return it in the envelope provided by **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2005**.

**CEDAR, The University of Warwick  
Coventry CV4 7AL**

**Telephone 024 7652 3638  
Fax: 024 7652 4472**

**NATIONAL ACADEMY FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED YOUTH  
SUMMER SCHOOL EXPERIENCE 2005**

**Post Summer School parent questionnaire**

**Application Process**

1.

	Straightforward	Fairly straightforward	Not straightforward	Difficult
a) Do you feel that the application process for the summer school was .....				
b) Was liaison with your child's school about the application for the summer school place ....				

2.

	To a great extent	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at all
a) To what extent did your child's school contribute financially towards the cost of the summer school?				
b) Did your child's attendance at the summer school put your family under financial pressure?				

**The Impact of the Summer School on your child**

3. How far do you think that your child has benefited from the summer school in terms of:

	A great deal	To some extent	Slightly	Not at all
a) Learning skills?				
b) Enthusiasm for learning?				
c) Improved performance at school?				

4.

	A great deal	To some extent	Slightly	Not at all
a) To what extent did being away from home for the summer school increase your child's sense of independence?				
b) To what extent do you think it was valuable for your child that the summer school was a residential experience?				

5.

	A great deal	To some extent	Slightly	Not at all
a) How much did your child enjoy the social aspects of the summer school?				
b) How much did your child enjoy the leisure activities during the summer school?				
c) How much does your child appear to be keeping in touch with other students from the summer school?				
d) How far has attendance at the summer school improved your child's confidence in social situations?				

**Reporting and Assessment**

6.

		A great deal	To some extent	Slightly	Not at all
a)	To what extent were you satisfied with the report you received about your child's performance at the summer school?				
b)	To what extent has the report enabled your child to become more aware of his/her strengths and weaknesses?				
c)	To what extent has your child been able to use the report to help his/her academic performance at school?				

**Overall Impact**

7.

		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With much difficulty
a)	How easily did the family deal with one child being away on summer school?				
b)	How easy did your child find it to fit back into family life after being away at the summer school?				
c)	How easy has your child found it to fit in at school again after the experience of the summer school?				

8. In your view, has attending the summer school increased your child's desire to become involved with other NAGTY activities?

A great deal	To some extent	Slightly	Not at all

9a) To what extent do you think your child would benefit from attending another NAGTY summer school?

A great deal	To some extent	Slightly	Not at all

9b) Did your child attend a NAGTY summer school in 2002,2003 or 2004? Yes  No

10. Please tell us how you feel that the summer school has affected your child. Tell us about positive and any negative aspects. Please use another sheet of paper if necessary.

.....  
 .....

**The Label 'Gifted and Talented'**

11.

		Positively	Mainly positively	Mixed reaction	Mainly negatively	Negatively
a)	How has your child's self-esteem been affected by being identified as 'gifted and talented'?					
b)	How have other pupils in your child's school reacted to your child being identified as gifted and talented?					
c)	How have the adults in your child's school reacted to your child being identified as gifted and talented?					

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your views on the summer school are important. Please return it in the envelope provided by **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2005**.

**CEDAR, The University of Warwick**  
**Coventry CV4 7AL**

**Telephone 024 7652 3638**  
**Fax: 024 7652 4472**