Recognising and Supporting Able Children in Primary Schools

Hilary Lee-Cobin and Pam Denicolo - David Fulton (1998)

This book is based on research done in several English primary schools in the mid 1990s. As such it gives a balanced view from the perspectives of teachers, parents, pupils and independent researchers. It reviews current thinking on high ability and draws together themes from the research while offering suggestions for parents and teachers.

One particularly useful and interesting element is the distinction it draws between 'achievers' and 'under achievers.' A variety of common differences are discussed including some which are easily recognised from personal experience. Some specific advice is given and while the book does relate specifically to the English National Curriculum, the ideas are equally applicable in Scotland.

The difficulties of able children who rarely complete work are discussed at length as is the need for appropriate follow up work for those children who complete work quickly. All this is set within advice which is equally appropriate for children of all abilities, giving due recognition to the importance of self esteem and good interpersonal relationships.

The book provides suggestions for experienced teachers, who, having recognised the talent and potential in their classroom are prepared to look critically at their own practice. While it does appear to give good advice it is not particularly easy to dip in and out of. I would recommend, 'Effective Provision for Able and Talented Children' by Barry Teare for advice and practical suggestions in a very user friendly format. This book does however make extended use of individual pupil case studies which illustrate and inform effectively.