



Robertson State School

Creating Brighter Futures Together



FAQ's

Q What is the gifted program at Robertson?

A At Robertson, we have a “whole school” approach to the education of gifted students. This means we acknowledge gifted students have *specific needs* that require a *consistent, school-wide response*. Our learning community recognises that gifted students aren't all the same and consequently offers flexible approaches for students to experience learning and develop their natural abilities. The overview gives a snapshot of provision at Robertson.

The program is not a separate “add on’ or “withdrawal” approach, but is integral to the everyday workings of the classroom.

Teachers receive professional development that enables them to provide a learning environment where giftedness can be recognised and responded to. Professional development sessions focus on developing a shared understanding of giftedness, how to identify the gifted and ways to respond to the needs of gifted students.

Q How are students chosen for the program?

A Students are not ‘chosen’ for a separate program because catering for gifted students is part of the everyday proceedings of the classroom. Giftedness is recognised as developmental and hence the nature of the environment provided is crucial to the recognition and development of abilities.

All students are treated as potentially gifted and through the provision of a responsive and enriched learning environment; teachers are able to observe special abilities and gifted behaviours. Once recognised, these abilities or traits are responded to with appropriate programs and instructional strategies.



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The issue of class placement is carefully considered at Robertson. Research by Kulik and Kulik documents that gifted students benefit from learning together and interacting with students of similar ability. In response to this research, gifted students are clustered together in mixed ability classes (*mainstream*) or placed in a whole class situation (*cluster or multi-age class*). Student achievement records as well as our identification register are consulted when matching students with teachers and placing them with their peers. To enable them to cope with the pace and level of learning, students who are clustered in a whole class situation are selected according to their learning characteristics and independent/autonomous working skills.

Q Is everyone IQ tested?

A No. Various identification instruments as well as classroom observations, assessment and testing results are used. Parent input is highly valued and any parent who thinks their child is gifted is welcome to complete a Sayler questionnaire. All of the above are used to develop a learner profile that is continually updated and passed from teacher to teacher.

Since 2014 a nonverbal cognitive test has been administered to all Prep students to assist our identification process. This empirical evidence is used in addition to observations and achievements. The test results give aptitude and achievement data, which informs and improves our teaching and assessment practices as well as student placement.

Q What do I need to do if I think my child is gifted?

A If the child is currently enrolled at Robertson and not being identified as gifted:

1. Complete the Sayler checklist and give this to the office staff or the Gifted Education Coordinator. A copy will be made and given to the classroom teacher.
2. Discuss your child and his/her specific needs with the classroom teacher.

A If you are currently going through or about to go through the enrolment process at Robertson:

1. Complete the enrolment form or waiting list form.



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2. During the interview process with the administration personnel (e.g. Deputy Principal), tell them that your child is gifted. If you have any testing/reports that identify your child as gifted, bring them to the interview.
3. Discuss your child and his/her specific needs with the classroom teacher that they are placed with.

Common Myths:

All children in the cluster classes are gifted.

Numbers are what drive the formation of a class because, like all schools, Robertson receives teacher allocation numbers according to the number of students enrolled. There is never a guarantee that the number of gifted students matches the number of students that have to form a class *e.g. There may be 94 students enrolled in Year 4 of which 8 students are gifted. Education Queensland limits Year 4 class size to 28 students. Consequently, three Year 4 classes of 28 students can be formed and there would be 10 students placed in a multi-age class.*

As many students as possible who are gifted are placed in these classes but often bright and successful students, who can cope with the pace and depth of learning level as well as the level of independence required, are considered for inclusion in these classes.

If you are not in the gifted class, you are not gifted.

There are many gifted students at Robertson who are found in the mainstream classes. As giftedness presents in many different forms, some of these students respond better to a different type of learning environment than that offered in the cluster classes. As far as possible, they are grouped with a teacher appropriate to their learning style and clustered with a small group of like-minded students.



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There is a separate program for the gifted.

As gifted students can be clustered in any class, teachers at Robertson receive professional development that enables them to provide a learning environment where giftedness can be recognised and responded to.

Children in mainstream classes are not extended or enriched.

All teachers are required to offer a differentiated curriculum that address different levels of learner readiness, achievement and interest. This means that enrichment and extension should happen in every classroom.

All gifted children suit the cluster classes

The cluster classes require students who are autonomous in their learning habits. In general this means they are required to take an active approach to the learning task at hand, are willing to take risks, can think deeply, learn quickly and easily and require limited scaffolding for tasks. Not all gifted students are suited to this learning environment and are placed in a class that better addresses their learning needs.

My parent letter to the principal will guarantee the teacher/class of my choice for my child/ren

Robertson values parents as important partners in our learning community. Parent input is highly valued and the letter enables parents to communicate the learning needs of your child/ren. Such information helps inform the educational decision making process as to the optimum learning environment that can be offered.



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The cluster classes receive more funding/resources than mainstream classes

All classes receive the same level of funding according to the number of students in the class.