

### Curse of giftedness

*From Marilyn Watson*

- 1 As an educator and a parent of gifted children, I thought your interview with Joan Freeman about the dangers of labelling children as gifted was unhelpful (9 October, p30). Although its main focus was on non-gifted children who have been wrongly labelled as gifted, often by their dysfunctional parents, the overall effect was to feed the stigma already attached to gifted children and their families.
- 2 Most parents of gifted children do not fit the stereotype of pushy tyrants. Indeed, a report called *The Education of Gifted and Talented Children* by the Australian Senate's Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education committee states that parents are more accurate at diagnosing their child's special needs than teachers are. Even so, they still tend to underestimate their child's ability rather than overestimate it.
- 3 Despite this, in many Australian schools giftedness is still strongly stigmatised by teachers and teachers' unions. Parents who believe their child is gifted have to be prepared to fight the system to get their child the support they need.
- 4 Freeman's assertion that "if you label a child as gifted when they are not ... the child has the most terrible burden" is no doubt true. But so is the reverse: a gifted child left to struggle without having their special learning needs recognised and addressed suffers too.
- 5 Freeman also suggests that gifted children may end up isolated among much older classmates. Yet what children need are "mind peers" rather than age peers. Just like children with learning difficulties, gifted children can have trouble fitting in and often do better in special learning environments. Gradeskipping can benefit them both socially and intellectually.  
*Nightcliff, Northern Territory, Australia*

*New Scientist, 2010*

## Tekst 1 Curse of giftedness

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- 1p 1 Which of the following does Merrilyn Watson make clear about the article in which Joan Freeman is interviewed?
- A It fails to clearly distinguish between gifted and less gifted children.
  - B It fuels existing prejudices about gifted children.
  - C It ignores the gifted child's social needs.
  - D It refuses to relate children's achievements to parents' high demands.

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### Bronvermelding

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