

MAKING USE OF COVID-19 CATCH-UP PREMIUM TO SUPPORT PUPILS

In response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on schools and other education settings, in particular the loss of teaching time caused by nationally-enforced school closures, the government announced a £1bn package of funding. This included a one-off universal £650m in Covid-19 Catch-up Premium.

This funding is allocated to mainstream secondary schools on the basis of £80 per pupil on roll in years 7-11. The funding is being distributed to schools in three tranches, across the autumn, spring and summer terms for the 2020/21 academic year. The first and second tranches, together, equate to £46.67 per eligible pupil, with the remaining £33.33 received in the third tranche. Whilst calculating funding on a per pupil basis, government guidance is clear that funding should be used as a single sum and directed on the basis of need and impact. The money is for a single year and will not be reflected in ongoing grant funding.

The projected amount of Covid-19 Catch-up Premium available to the School for 2020/21 is £75,520.

As a wholly selective school, admitting pupils on the basis of their academic ability alone, there is a narrow ability range within each cohort. Remote education provision has been designed to maintain strong progress for all year groups, and pupils are able to participate in their full timetable of academic and pastoral lessons. It is recognised, however, that the challenges of working from home, particularly for those from backgrounds of relative disadvantage, may pose risks that some pupils may fall behind their peers.

Additional funding is therefore being utilised to facilitate:

- High quality teaching and learning for all;
- Targeted academic support; and
- Wider support for pupils to aid wellbeing and engagement.

This strategy, informed by the research of the Education Endowment Foundation, seeks to prevent pupils from falling (further) behind, or facing disadvantage in terms of their access to education; maximise the effectiveness of teaching time to ensure excellent progress against the curriculum; and deliver interventions to address particular academic and pastoral issues and support the affected pupils to catch-up and meet their targets.

The following sections set out how the funding is being used to support the above objectives and examples of how the impact is being monitored throughout the year.

High quality teaching and learning for all:

- Investment into additional educational tools – Expenditure to roll-out the use of Microsoft Teams teaching across all departments and year groups, including additional IT hardware (e.g. webcams), training and support, and upgrades to the School’s internet service. Supporting teachers and pupils to reliably access this technology, enabling an enhanced daily remote educational experience – both during periods of full school closure, and for pupils or staff joining in-School lessons when isolating at home. The use of live meetings during lessons facilitates quicker progress against the curriculum, and allows for high quality learning by making it easier for complex material to be taught and for teachers to gain assurance of understanding, as well as more effectively facilitating collaborative and performance work. Advancements also being made with eQE (the School’s online learning portal), for example the ability to run internal synchronous timed exam assessments to gather diagnostic data on pupil progress.
 - Enabling pupils’ in-School timetables to be fully replicated remotely, maximising the use of structured learning time, and allowing teachers to maintain a record of pupil attendance (which is very high).
 - Receiving positive feedback from pupils on their remote learning experience, via pupil conferences, with reports that they feel the routine of meeting with their classes at the time of each lesson is aiding their progress and preventing them falling behind with their work.
 - Heads of Subject and Senior Leadership team monitoring progress against curricula and schemes of work.
- Supporting access to remote education – Funding used to purchase IT hardware (laptop devices), for delivery to the homes of pupils, to enable full access to the remote education offer. Devices provided where pupils have been identified as disadvantaged and without the necessary equipment at home to engage equally with their peers – including with respect to the live teaching elements delivered through MS Teams. This is crucial in preventing pupils from falling behind, given the maintenance of the full timetable of subject lessons and pastoral sessions.
 - Every pupil can access learning in School or at home. Where vulnerable pupils are unable to work effectively from home, they will be accommodated on the premises.
 - Access and engagement being monitored via daily form group registration and via attendance registers in the live meeting element of each lesson; with senior staff following up where there are concerns about non-attendance.
 - Assessment data and feedback maintained to track pupils’ understanding of taught material, with staff alert to those pupils who have needed extra logistical support.

Targeted academic support

- Facilitating intervention classes – Additional teaching staff capacity used to create timetable space for regular intervention lessons for those pupils taking their GCSEs identified as needing extra academic support to reach their target grades. Provision increased to 20 pupils in the current Year 11 cohort, identified on the basis of their RAG rating (a colour-coding resulting from progress data) and other performance data. Pupils receive weekly lessons in English, Maths and Science (as relevant to each individual), delivered by a subject

expert. Additional resource has been allocated to split Science into Biology, Chemistry and Physics this year. These classes are in addition to their full timetable of academic studies, meaning they receive an extra period per week compared to their peers in each intervention subject for which they are identified. These are small-group classes, typically of 4-5 pupils, to allow for highly targeted provision. This supports the wider use of technology to enable subject clinics, outside of timetabled lessons, in all subject areas for pupils in any year group needing additional support, either as a self-referral or as advised by their class teacher.

- Progress of pupils monitored through submitted work and assessment tasks within their main lessons for each subject, with tracking for all pupils with respect to their personal stretch targets.
- Discussion of impact through forum such as bespoke tutorials with form tutors.

Wider support for pupils to aid wellbeing and engagement

- Online counselling service – Providing a professional counselling service through a continued partnership with Rephael House, to deliver online appointments to support pupils with a range of challenges. In addition to the pre-existing caseload, there have been many difficulties for young people associated with the pandemic and the lockdowns. These range from family bereavement and ill health, to anxiety, isolation, and the impact of different ways of working on their ability to keep on top of their work. There is recognition that strong pastoral provision supports academic performance, with counselling (and other ongoing strategies such as the pastoral curriculum, enrichment offer, assemblies, peer collaboration, and peer mentoring to deliver vertical support) helping those most affected to maintain strong engagement with their learning.
 - Pastoral staff (form tutors, Heads of Year, and senior leaders) closely monitoring pupils to check on progress and wellbeing.
 - CORE analysis has previously shown in-school counselling to have had clinically-significant positive impacts for service users at the School.

Progress with regards to these objectives and measures continues to be assessed on an ongoing basis. Should circumstances highlight additional challenges, or new methods necessary to aid pupils in catching-up, these will be considered, and this plan may be added to by the Senior Leadership Team.

The approach to the use of the Covid-19 Catch-up Premium is reported to and monitored by the Governing Body.