

COVID-19 Catch-up Premium

Background

As part of the return to education, the DfE has announced a £1bn funding package for 'catch-up' in schools¹:

- £650mn to be given directly to schools to spend flexibly as fits the needs of their cohort;
- £350mn to be used to establish the National Tutoring Programme, whereby schools can access tuition at a subsidised rate.

The King's Academy has been allocated £89,600 for COVID-19 catch-up. This is a one-off payment for the 2020/21 academic year. The purpose of this money is fulfil the DfE's curriculum expectations for this year²:

- An ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term.
- Aim to return to the school's normal curriculum by summer term 2021.
- Plan on the basis of the educational needs of the pupils.
- Develop remote education so that it is integrated into school curriculum planning.

It should be noted that the Academy is proceeding with a full school curriculum (i.e. all subjects) from September 2020.

Identification of need

While it is vital to catch-up with all year groups, the immediate priority is obviously Years 11 and 13. At the time of writing, all GCSE and A Level examinations are going ahead in summer 2021, although a short delay has been proposed to the timing of examinations. A decision on this is reported to be 'imminent'. Our planning is therefore predicated on all students sitting a full set of examinations, although some subjects have had curricula adjusted by Ofqual (e.g. removal of units, reduction in number of assessed pieces required in practical subjects, etc.) The level of need therefore varies across subjects. For example:

- English language and mathematics have had no adjustments made to their curriculum content, and the spoken language assessment must still be completed in English language (although this does not contribute to students' grades);
- spoken language assessments have been removed from modern foreign languages, which reduces the teaching requirements significantly;
- the practical examination has been removed from art;
- the requirement for students to undertake fieldwork in geography has been replaced with a requirement for students to undertake 'virtual fieldwork', where fieldwork cannot take place;
- no changes have been made to the curriculum content or assessment arrangements for business studies.

In seeking to plan a catch-up programme, therefore, the first step is in understanding each subject's specific needs, rather than creating a 'blanket' programme which focuses equal time and attention on all subjects. This process is ongoing at the time of writing but will largely be concluded before the LGB meeting on Thursday 8 October.

Actions to date

While it is important to identify subject need, it is clear that English and mathematics will require additional time for teaching. Students have therefore received one additional period of English and mathematics per week, delivered during morning pastoral time, and this will continue up to first rehearsals (w.c. 16 November). A wider morning programme will be developed after the first rehearsals in response to (a) identification of need as above; (b) student achievement in these first rehearsal examinations.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-catch-up-premium>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#section-3-curriculum-behaviour-and-pastoral-support>

Proposed utilisation of COVID-19 catch-up premium

It is our belief that our own staff know our students best and therefore know their needs, based on ongoing diagnostic assessment in class and strong pastoral structures. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has published its guide to supporting school planning³ to assist schools in the 2020/21 academic year. The three key themes are:

- high-quality teaching;
- targeted academic support;
- wider strategies.

We have therefore developed our proposed strategy using these themes:

(a) High quality teaching

“The best available evidence indicates that great teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve outcomes for their pupils. This was true before the COVID-19 pandemic and it will continue to be vital as schools plan for all pupils to return in the upcoming academic year.” (EEF)

We are continuing to pursue the development of teaching and learning within the new routines that have been established, so much of this work is ongoing from previous years. We have significantly increased the focus on diagnostic assessment (while temporarily reducing the focus on summative assessment), to help staff adapt their planning to the circumstances.

We have also purchased a package of assessment for Year 7 students which will help staff to diagnose gaps in knowledge and understanding from Key Stage 2, as well as help us to guide future academic matters (setting, target setting, etc.)

Estimated spend:

- £5000 (additional curriculum resources, additional IT, etc.)
- £4680 (GL Assessment)

(b) Targeted academic support

We believe that our staff know our students well and are therefore best placed to direct academic support. For this reason, we are not convinced that accessing the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) will yield significant benefits. This is, in part, because there are very few details regarding the NTP at present. Our preferred model (at this stage) would be to recruit two additional members of staff in English and mathematics to support interventions in these subjects. These may be HLTAs or subsidised ‘academic mentors’, sourced through the NTP once more details are known. We would also intend to run a wider holiday intervention programme this year, with staff being paid to run intervention days throughout the year.

Estimated spend:

- £50000 (English and maths intervention)
- £25000 (TKA staff time, £120/day, 210 teacher days)

(c) Wider strategies

Attendance, behaviour and social and emotional support in school will all require additional resource this year. We have already allocated increased resources in this area out of the general Academy budget but we would propose to hold the remaining portion of the £89,600 in reserve to support in this, or any of the two areas above.

Estimated spend:

- £4920 (contingency, spend to be determined).

It should be stressed that this proposal is *provisional* at this stage, subject to completion of HOD meetings and subject to the 2021 public examinations proceeding as expected.

SRe, 5-10-20

³ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/guide-to-supporting-schools-planning/>