

Catch Up Premium Funding

The Sydney Russell School

Catch Up Premium Funding

For the 2020-21 academic year, Sydney Russell School will be in receipt a COVID-19 Catch Up Premium Grant to the value of £186,570.30.

This document serves to outline the intention of how the grant will be spent, in line with recommendations from the DfE and the extensive research of the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) as to the best use of the fund. This document also serves to outline how the school intends to evaluate the effect of the spending of the fund on the educational attainment of our pupils. Given the changing national context, with the extended period of national lockdown in the beginning of 2021 and pending announcements as to full return dates for students, this statement and some of the intentions of spending are subject to change, as the priorities for our students and their education shift in the national picture.

How is the grant intended to be spent?

The EEF outline three key areas for the spending of the Catch-Up Premium Grant as best practice to support the learning of students and to begin to address the learning loss of the partial school closures and periods of isolation during the COVID pandemic since March 2020. These three areas are:

1. Teaching and whole school strategies
2. Targeted support
3. Wider strategies

At the beginning of the school year, we undertook a thorough evaluation of the needs of our school community and students given the challenges we have faced. This evaluation involved base-line testing of students, extensive communication with students and parents as to their access to technology and the resources needed to make their learning effective and a forensic consideration of our teaching and learning pedagogy, considering how adaptations needed to be made to curriculum, teaching and assessment approaches both in school and remotely to ensure that our students are best supported in getting back to full education. Following this assessment, the school intends (and has to date already) spend the Catch-Up Premium Grant on measures addressing the three key areas of recommendation from the EEF.

In the order of the strands as outlined by the EEF, our intentions are as follows:

1. Teaching and whole school strategies

- In order to support great teaching, the purchase of webcams for each member of staff to use from their school computer. This allows not only for the teaching of students remotely, both during lockdown periods and periods of student isolation via Microsoft TEAMS, but crucially also had allowed for the continuation of our extensive CPD programme for staff. This remote CPD programme, through the use of the webcams, has enabled staff to be comprehensively trained on the practicalities and pedagogy behind teaching online, resulting in a quality of remote education that we are proud of
- The purchase of tablets to support staff in remote learning, specifically in subjects where modelling and annotation are at the heart of effective pedagogy (such as Maths, Science, Art, Design and Technology)
- Through the hiring of staff in key subjects, we have been able to create a small surplus of periods for experienced staff, who are able to use these teaching non-contact periods to work with newer and more inexperienced staff to help with the planning of their online and recovery teaching to ensure that the pedagogy and approach is right to maximise student learning online and upon their return.

2. Targeted support

- Having identified the students most in need of support and the relevant topics, the school has allocated a significant proportion of the funding to bringing in the necessary staff to develop one to one and small group tuition. We have engaged with the Teach First Mentor programme to bring in two members of staff to support students in small group tuition for English and Humanities at the Secondary phase, as well as using the funding for further members of staff to support students through small group tuition for Maths, Literacy and Science across both the Primary and Secondary phase.
- At the Primary phase specifically, LSAs are being used online currently to run one to one and small group interventions for the pupils most in need – once plans for the return to school are clear from March 2021, the intention is to allocate some of the funding to enabling this support to continue in school through the use of LSAs and allocation of non-contact hours.

3. Wider strategies

- Given our evaluation at the beginning of the school year, the employment of some of the elements recommended as best practice by the EEF in the wider strategies strand is perhaps our most pressing and important element. A significant amount of the grant has been allocated to support the wider strategies below, given the identified need in our community and concerns about the learning loss of our students becoming even more significant as the school term progressed given the large numbers of students isolating in the Autumn Term and the transition to remote learning again from January 2021 onwards.
- A major focus of the funding spend has been on access to technology. Although a number have been provided by the DfE, the school and its community simply did not have enough access to laptops and devices to support effective home learning. As such the school has invested significantly in laptops to ensure that all students have access the remote learning currently being undertaken, to prevent further learning loss. The intention of this is also to support students with their learning when they return to school, with the laptops allowing them to access the materials put online by staff after lessons, to provide them with devices to access homework and independent learning effectively, to support the work being undertaken in the classroom. The intention with the laptops is also that it will significantly improve the quality and sustainability of our technology provision at the Primary phase long term, with technology and online devices intended to become an integrated part of the curriculum for Primary pupils when they return with the numbers that have been purchased.
- Funding has also been invested in the support of parents and carers during the current lockdown – a number of the staff who had been hired for the purpose of small group and one to one tuition when students physically return to school have been used as part of a pastoral calling network, checking in with parents and students frequently to ensure engagement and to resolve any issues with access to technology and therefore access to learning.

How will the effect of this expenditure on educational attainment be assessed?

At the beginning of the school year, students undertook baseline assessments in key identified areas and subjects to evaluate where students were in their learning. The tests looked at key skills and elements of understanding we would have expected students to have at that point in their school career based on our curriculum. The outcomes of these baseline assessments gave us a clear indication of topics and skills that needed recovery, as well as those students in need of more intensive support through the approaches outlined above. This baseline data was then correlated to assessment data from the first round of Tracking Assessments and VIMAs across the end of the first term.

The intention to evaluate the impact of this expenditure is to integrate the consideration of the spending into the assessment cycle that the school currently has, with the baseline assessments and first Tracking Assessments being used as a starting point against which all future assessment data is referenced back to. In addition to this, the following specific measures will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the spending decisions outlined in this document:

- Close tracking of data for students in the one to one and small tuition groups, looking not only at assessment data, but also engagement, quality of classwork and teacher feedback
- Feedback from staff, student and parent surveys as to the quality of our current teaching and learning provision and suggested areas for continued improvement
- Data on student engagement, especially compared to the engagement data we have for remote learning from the end of the 2020 school year
- Considerations of the effectiveness of CPD, planning and curriculum work undertaken with staff through our termly Department and Phase review process