

# Press release: Fund for bright disadvantaged pupils launched

- £23 million programme to support the brightest pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to reach their potential
- Applications open for organisations to manage fund, which runs until 2020

New work to raise education standards for the country's brightest pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds will begin today (27 April) as Education Minister Nick Gibb invites organisations to manage new funding designed to support their academic attainment.

The £23 million Future Talent Fund programme will test new and innovative ways of helping the most talented disadvantaged pupils to remain on their high performing trajectory and prevent them falling behind their more affluent peers.

The new fund manager will run and evaluate a trial of projects from January 2019 which will help all schools to support their most able, disadvantaged pupils – to address the drop off in academic performance between key stage 2 and key stage 4.

This will help to build on the government's record, with 1.9 million more children now in good or outstanding schools than in 2010 and the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers narrowing by 10% at secondary and 10.5% at primary since 2011.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said,

Academic standards are rising, with 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than 2010 and importantly, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers narrowing. But we want to make sure every child reaches their full potential and is not held back because of their circumstances.

Through this Future Talent Fund we will test new and innovative approaches so that we can find out what works best to ensure the brightest pupils from the most disadvantaged families can excel in their education.

Today's announcement builds on wider efforts to support disadvantaged pupils and raise standards across the country, including:

- £72 million to support 12 Opportunity Areas to improve the life chances of young people in disadvantaged communities;
- The government's social mobility action plan Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential which focuses £800million of resources on helping children make the most of their lives; and
- 75 projects sharing £25million to provide more support for schools, many of which will increase pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and help to the attainment gap.

The £23 million programme will deliver at least 30 trial projects between January 2019 and July 2020 following two bidding rounds. The scheme will champion best practice and encourage evidence-led interventions, including those that could be funded by schools using their Pupil Premium funding.

In the autumn, a variety of organisations will be eligible to apply for the funding. This will include state-funded schools and multi academy trusts, charities and research organisations, independent schools and universities. Projects supported by the fund must be delivered in non-selective, state-funded secondary schools in England and will cover at least one of the following strands of work:

- Curriculum: such as broadening or deepening what is covered in the curriculum;
- Pedagogy: for example, individualised teaching, the use of digital technology or feedback;
- Parental involvement: which could include aspiration interventions, engagement through technology or behavioural insight techniques;
- Mentoring and tutoring: including academic mentoring, community based mentoring, school based mentoring, one-to-one tuition, group tuition or peer tutoring;
- Transition between key stages: such as summer schools or transition practices in schools; and
- Enrichment activities: which could include after-school classes, extra-curricular activities or visits.

Academic standards are rising following the introduction of a more rigorous school curriculum and gold standard GCSEs and A levels to bring our education

system level with the best in the world. Latest performance data shows:

- In 2017 72% met the expected standard in reading, 75% in maths and 77% in grammar, punctuation and spelling at KS2 and overall, the proportion reaching the expected standard has improved by 8 percentage points on the previous year;
- The attainment gap between disadvantaged secondary school pupils and their peers has narrowed by 3.2% since last year and 10% since 2011; and
- More pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils and pupils on free school meals are being entered for English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects compared to last year, ensuring pupils have the knowledge and skills they need for future success.