

Pupil premium strategy statement: Howard Community Academy

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium funding to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged pupils.

It outlines our pupil premium strategy, how we intend to spend the funding in this academic year and the and the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year.

School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	186 (+15 nursery)
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	48%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement for each academic year)	2025/26- 2027/28
Date this statement was published	November 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2026
Statement authorised by	Alison Weir, Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Alison Weir, Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Prue Rayner, Chair of Governors

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£108,920.00
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£ 0
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years	£ 0
Total budget for this academic year	£108,920.00

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention is that all pupils, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, receive high quality teaching tailored to their needs, make good progress and achieve high attainment across all subject areas. The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve that goal.

Many of our vulnerable pupils, such as those who have a social worker or who are young carers, face significant challenges. The activity we have outlined in this statement is also intended to support their needs, regardless of whether they are disadvantaged or not.

High-quality teaching is at the heart of our approach, with a focus on areas in which disadvantaged pupils require the most support. This is proven to have the greatest impact on closing the disadvantage attainment gap and at the same time will benefit the non-disadvantaged pupils in our school. Implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that non-disadvantaged pupils' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

Our strategy is also integral to wider school plans for education recovery, notably in its targeted support for pupils whose education has been worst affected, including non-disadvantaged pupils.

Our approach will be responsive to our cohort and individual needs. To ensure it is effective we will:

- adopt a whole school approach to ensure pupils receive high quality teaching
- act early to intervene at the point need is identified
- address wider support for pupils and their social and emotional learning (SEL) ensuring the best possible opportunity to enable readiness to learn

Challenges

This details the key challenges to achievement that we have identified among our disadvantaged pupils.

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils indicate underdeveloped oral language skills and vocabulary gaps among many disadvantaged pupils. These are evident from our intake in Nursery and Reception through to KS2.

2	Assessments, observations, and discussions with pupils suggest disadvantaged pupils generally have greater difficulties with literacy with lower levels of language. This negatively impacts their development as communicators, readers and writers. Many of our cohorts have significant speech and language gaps. 13% (25 children) have been identified as having a need for speech and language intervention according to our language link assessment tool.
3	Internal assessments indicate that writing attainment across the school is significantly lower than other subject areas. We have identified specific year groups, who have been specifically impacted by the pandemic closures and who have high levels of mobility. Often this group of children join us with low levels of prior attainment mid-way through their school journey.
4	Our assessments and observations indicate that the education and well-being of many of our disadvantaged pupils have been impacted by partial school closures to a greater extent than for other pupils. These findings are supported by national studies. This has resulted in significant knowledge gaps leading to pupils falling further behind age-related expectations.
5	Our assessments, observations and discussions with pupils and families have identified social and emotional issues for many pupils and a lack of enrichment opportunities, also exacerbated during the school closures. Teacher referrals for support have markedly increased during the pandemic. 59 pupils (32% of our school) have been identified with special educational needs and currently require additional support, with a significant proportion identified with social and emotional needs. (20 C&L, 27 C&I, 11 SEMH and 1 Sensory/physical) We have a significant number of children supported through social care or Early Help.

Intended outcomes

This explains the outcomes we are aiming for **by the end of our current strategy plan**, and how we will measure whether they have been achieved.

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Improved oral language skills and vocabulary for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.	Assessments and observations indicate significantly improved oral language among disadvantaged pupils. This is evident when triangulated with other sources of evidence, including engagement in lessons, book scrutiny and ongoing formative assessment.
Improved reading attainment for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.	Standardised assessment data shows that a significant number of pupils (50%+) meet age related reading outcomes in 2025/26.

Improved writing attainment for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.	Standardised assessment data shows that an improved proportion of pupils (50%+) meet age related writing outcomes in 2025/26.
To achieve and sustain improved wellbeing for all pupils in our school, particularly our disadvantaged pupils.	Sustained higher levels of wellbeing are demonstrated by: • qualitative data from student voice, student and parent surveys and teacher observations • a significant increase in attendance data • a significant increase in participation in enrichment activities such as breakfast club, particularly among disadvantaged pupils • access to a planned and consistent wellbeing curriculum, focusing on readiness to learn • access to appropriate whole school wellbeing approach, nurture provision and play therapy for those identified with specific need

Activity in this academic year

This details how we intend to spend our pupil premium (and recovery premium funding) **this academic year** to address the challenges listed above.

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £11,000 (More detail available in Pupil Premium plan)

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Embedding oracy activities across the school curriculum. These can support pupils to articulate key ideas, consolidate understanding and extend vocabulary. We will purchase language link resources and fund ongoing teaching assistant support in class to deliver specific targeted interventions.	There is a strong evidence base that suggests oral language interventions, including dialogic activities such as high-quality classroom discussion, are inexpensive to implement with high impacts on reading: Oral language interventions Toolkit Strand Education Endowment Foundation EEF Our Language Link data analysis 2024-2025 demonstrates children making good progress.	1,2,4
Purchase of Little Wandle SSP and CPD resources. Participation in professional development opportunities as a partner school with the Wensum English Hub. Participation in the Reciprocal Reading project with the EEF.	Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base that indicates a positive impact on the accuracy of word reading, particularly for disadvantaged pupils: Phonics Teaching and Learning Toolkit EEF	2
Purchase of Write Stuff resources and training to provide professional development with a focus on writing.	There is a strong evidence base to indicate that regular opportunities for writing, in addition to exposure to high quality teaching and intervention is key to developing writing skills. The importance of high-quality	3

	language rich environments is important. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/183479/what_is_the_research_evidence_on_writing.pdf	
Enhancement of our maths teaching and curriculum planning in line with DfE guidance. We will fund teacher release time to access Maths Hub resources and CPD (including Numbersense training). Work with the maths hub to support newly appointed maths subject leader and staff to embed high quality maths teaching across all year groups.	The DfE non-statutory guidance has been produced in conjunction with the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, drawing on evidence-based approaches: Maths guidance KS 1 and 2.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)	4
Ensuring staff use evidence-based whole-class teaching interventions	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit Effective use of Teaching Assistants guidance from EEF: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/teaching-assistants	4
Improve the quality of social and emotional (SEL) learning. SEL (Nurture) approaches will be embedded into routine educational practices and supported by professional development and training for staff.	There is extensive evidence associating childhood social and emotional skills with improved outcomes at school and in later life (e.g., improved academic performance, attitudes, behaviour and relationships with peers): EEF Social and Emotional Learning.pdf(education	5

We will purchase updated PHSE curriculum resources to support delivery of the PHSE and RSE curriculum.	endowmentfoundation.org.uk	
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £40,280

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Establish small group reading and writing interventions for disadvantaged pupils falling behind age-related expectations Additional maths sessions targeted at pupils who require further maths support.	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit	2, 3, 4
Purchase of Language Link programme to identify speech and language needs and targeted intervention to improve listening, narrative and vocabulary skills for pupils who have relatively low spoken language skills.	Oral language interventions can have a positive impact on pupils' language skills. Approaches that focus on speaking, listening and a combination of the two show positive impacts on attainment: Oral language interventions EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	1,2 and 4
Additional phonics sessions targeted at disadvantaged pupils who require further phonics support. This will be delivered in collaboration with Wensum English hub.	Phonics approaches have a strong evidence base indicating a positive impact on pupils, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds. Targeted phonics interventions have been shown to be more	2

	effective when delivered as regular sessions over a period up to 12 weeks: Phonics Teaching and Learning Toolkit EEF	
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £49000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Embedding a Breakfast club to ensure readiness to learn	Both targeted interventions and universal approaches can have positive overall effects: Behaviour interventions EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	5
Employ staff to drive and collect identified children (at risk of persistent absenteeism) in the school minibus to bring them to school in the morning.	Both targeted interventions and universal approaches can have positive overall effects: Behaviour interventions EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	5
Employ a nurture lead practitioner (Thrive and Nurture trained) to support children with acute SEMH need and trained nurture practitioners	Both targeted interventions and universal approaches can have positive overall effects: Behaviour interventions EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)	5
Whole staff training on therapeutic (SEL) approaches with the aim of developing our SEL provision across school.	Both targeted interventions and universal approaches can have positive overall effects: Behaviour interventions EEF	5

	educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk	
Provide access to nurture support and play therapy targeted intervention work for identified pupils.	Both targeted interventions and universal approaches can have positive overall effects: Behaviour interventions EEf educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk	5
Provide access to 1:1 emotional literacy support (ELSA) to develop life skills, self-esteem and self-confidence for identified vulnerable children.	Both targeted interventions and universal approaches can have positive overall effects: Behaviour interventions EEf educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk	5
Ensure access to educational learning opportunities for all children, regardless of their background. We will fund and subsidise educational visits to allow equity for all pupils to access rich opportunities to develop cultural capital. Instrumental tuition for Years 3,4 and 5.	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/ https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/implementation-in-education	
Contingency fund for acute issues.	Based on our experiences and those of similar schools to ours, we have identified a need to set a small amount of funding aside to respond quickly to needs that have not yet been identified.	All

Total budgeted cost: £108,920.00

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Our internal standardised assessments during 2024/25 suggested that the performance of disadvantaged pupils was below their peers in key areas of the curriculum in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 disadvantaged pupils were performing below their peers. Internal progress measures indicated that pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding made some progress in writing. Progress measures in maths and reading have been impacted by children joining our school mid-way through the year with lower prior attainment. Our Key Stage 2 outcomes in reading showed above average progress for disadvantaged pupils (IDSR).

Our evaluation of the approaches delivered in previous academic years indicates that tutoring delivered by external providers had a positive impact on progress, but due to budget limitations we were unable to continue this level of external support in 2024-2025.

We have also drawn on school data and observations to assess wider issues impacting disadvantaged pupils' performance, including attendance, behaviour and wellbeing, which are significant for our disadvantaged pupils.

Our assessment of the reasons for these outcomes points primarily to parental disengagement and lack of ability to effectively support learning at home, which is additionally linked to Covid-19 impact, which disrupted all our subject areas to varying degrees. As evidenced in schools across the country, school closure was most detrimental to our disadvantaged pupils, and they were not able to benefit from our pupil premium funded improvements to teaching and targeted interventions to the degree we had intended. Although all pupils had access to the technology to access a remote high-quality curriculum, aided by use of online resources such as those provided by Oak National Academy, many parents failed to engage fully with the learning provided. This has left children with a legacy of significant gaps in their learning. In addition, our younger children have not been exposed to the same opportunities to develop oral language skills through socialisation.

Our assessments and observations indicated that pupil behaviour, levels of literacy, wellbeing and mental health were significantly impacted last year, exacerbated by COVID-19-related issues, pupil migration with children joining us with low prior attainment levels and gaps in their education and the impact of the cost of living crisis on families, exacerbating poverty and related issues. The impact was particularly acute for disadvantaged pupils. We used pupil premium funding to provide wellbeing support for all pupils, and targeted interventions where required. Members of staff have been trained as Nurture practitioners and Emotional Literacy Support Assistants. Having

focused on enabling readiness to learn, we are building on that approach with the activities detailed in this plan.

Externally provided programmes

Programme	Provider
Boxall profile online	SEMH Assessment & Emotional Behavioural Toolkit for Children - Interventions & Strategies (boxallprofile.org)

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

Measure	Details
How did you spend your service pupil premium allocation last academic year?	Not applicable
What was the impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils?	Not applicable

Further information (optional)

One of our key values is community and a key feature of our school improvement journey is around engaging the community.

In addition to the above, as part of our Artsmark journey, we are actively building in opportunities to enrich and develop our children's cultural capital through visiting artists, links with the Royal Ballet school, providing educational opportunities for all such as instrumental tuition and providing rich educational visits. Forest school forms part of our outdoor provision.

For all of our children, we use our school minibus to transport our pupils to local venues and offer opportunities to engage with sporting events with other local schools.

Our other values- aspiration, experiences and nurturing- underpin our approach at Howard aimed at providing high quality learning experiences and teaching for our children. Our pupil premium spending aligns closely with this focus on quality first teaching and quality learning experiences.