

Pupil Premium Strategy Statement

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery premium for the 2024 to 2025 academic year) 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 effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

School overview

Detail	Data
School name	Dawn House School
Number of pupils in school	102
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	18.6%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2024 - 2025
Date this statement was published	October 2024
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2025
Statement authorised by	Jenny McConnell Principal
Pupil premium lead	Ben Norman
Governor / Trustee lead	Neil Maslen

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£42,400
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£6,892
Total budget for this academic year If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	£42,400 + £6,892 Spent = £49,292

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

At Dawn House School, we believe in engaging children in active learning that contributes to their successful futures. We aim to develop a can-do approach to problem solving and support pupils to communicate confidently. Our curriculum aims to enable our pupils to make a positive contribution and to aspire to meet their full potential in all aspects of life at Dawn House School and beyond.

Our aim is to use pupil premium funding to help us achieve and sustain positive outcomes for our disadvantaged pupils. Whilst socio-economic disadvantage is not always the primary challenge our pupils face, we do see a variance in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils across the school when compared to their peers (and those who join us at similar starting points), particularly in terms of:

- Academic attainment
- Progression to further and higher education
- Employability
- Social opportunities

Our approach centres around high-quality teaching focussed on areas that disadvantaged pupils require it most, targeted support based on robust diagnostic assessment of need, and helping pupils to access a broad and balanced curriculum. Although our strategy is focused on the needs of disadvantaged pupils, it will benefit all pupils in our school where funding is spent on whole-school approaches, such as high-quality teaching. Implicit in the intended outcomes detailed below, is the intention that outcomes for non-disadvantaged pupils will be improved alongside progress for their disadvantaged peers.

We will also provide disadvantaged pupils with support to develop independent life and social skills and to ensure that high-quality work experience, careers guidance and further and higher education guidance is available to all.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	All disadvantaged pupils at our school have significant learning disabilities and are supported by an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP). These tailored plans are essential in addressing their unique educational needs and ensuring they receive the necessary resources and support to thrive academically and socially.
2	Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds often exhibit limited interaction and communication skills, which can significantly hinder their academic progress. As a school specialising in speech, language and communication needs, we recognize from initial assessments that these pupils require substantial support in developing their communication abilities. This lack of skills can further impact their emotional regulation, making it challenging for them to navigate social situations and manage their feelings effectively
3	Our assessments, observations and conversations with disadvantaged pupils indicate that they often have limited independence skills, particularly in areas such as personal development and independent travel. These pupils frequently require additional support to cultivate the essential life skills necessary for navigating their environment and achieving greater autonomy.
4	Limited access to enrichment experiences - Through observations and conversations with pupils and their families, we find that disadvantaged pupils generally have fewer opportunities to develop cultural capital outside of school.
5	Complex emotional wellbeing issues - Our assessments, observations and discussions with pupils show that disadvantaged pupils generally have greater challenges around low self-esteem, emotional literacy, building relationships and resilience.

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
PP pupils to be given opportunities to raise aspirations through ambitious, relevant and appropriate curriculum opportunities.	Pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, make significant progress toward their EHCP outcomes through quality first teaching, access to external providers, small group instruction, and diverse learning experiences. Additionally, disadvantaged pupils demonstrate academic progress through the school's D-Level assessment framework, in-line with the progress of their non-disadvantaged peers.

Provide support to all families and pupils to improve attendance, mental health and wellbeing.	Attendance to be in line with national average for SEN schools.
PP pupils have greater confidence and independence to help them engage more with the wider community and prepare for adulthood.	PP pupils have an increase in the number of community visits and enrichment activities.
PP pupils feel better prepared for career progression and / or HE opportunities through mentoring, work experience and independent careers guidance	PP pupils are provided with work experience opportunities and access to independent careers advice to ensure that all pupils transition into appropriate provision post-Dawn House School, leading to increased levels of meaningful employment. Our commitment is to eliminate NEET instances, ensuring that every pupil has a clear pathway to further education or employment

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: £10,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Forest Schools	<p>Research suggests that Forest Schools positively impact children's academic progress and support EHCP targets in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence: Providing children with the freedom, time, and space to explore fosters independence and problem-solving skills, supporting their ability to approach academic challenges and meet personal EHCP targets, such as developing independent learning strategies. • Social skills: Team-based activities, like sharing tools or participating in collaborative tasks, promote turn-taking, teamwork, and awareness of 	1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

	<p>peers' needs. These skills are essential for group work, improving classroom participation, and progressing towards social communication targets in EHCPs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication: Sensory experiences in the natural environment stimulate language development and encourage the use of descriptive vocabulary and questioning, supporting expressive and receptive language goals in EHCPs and enhancing communication for academic tasks.• Motivation: The stimulating woodland setting increases focus and engagement, helping children develop the ability to sustain attention on tasks. This directly benefits their capacity to concentrate on learning activities, improving academic performance in subjects requiring extended focus.• Physical skills: Activities like climbing, digging, or tool use develop fine and gross motor skills, which support essential classroom skills, such as handwriting, using tools in design technology, or participating in physical education, aligning with EHCP physical development targets.• Knowledge and understanding: Exploration of natural surroundings promotes curiosity and critical thinking skills, enriching understanding in science, geography, and environmental education. This supports academic progression and contributes to achieving EHCP targets related to knowledge acquisition and real-world understanding. <p>The Benefits of Forest School (forestschooltraining.co.uk)</p>	
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Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £30,400

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Art Therapy	<p>Art therapy supports children and young people in developing greater self-awareness, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills, which are critical for their academic progress and engagement in learning. Through creating images and objects, pupils can express thoughts and feelings that may otherwise act as barriers to learning, allowing the art therapist to help them process emotions and develop coping strategies. This improved emotional resilience and focus directly contribute to progress toward their EHCP targets, particularly in areas related to communication, social interaction, and behaviour for learning. Research has also shown that participation in the arts can enhance cognitive abilities and mental wellbeing, supporting overall academic outcomes.</p> <p>What is Art Therapy and its Benefits Priory (priorygroup.com)</p>	1, 2 and 5
Drama Therapy	<p>Research suggests drama therapy provides the following benefits, which can support academic progress and contribute to achieving EHCP targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves emotional expression: Offers students a safe space to explore and express feelings that may be difficult to verbalize, reducing emotional barriers to 	1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

	<p>learning and enabling better focus in academic tasks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhances social skills: Facilitates interaction and collaboration with peers, promoting communication and teamwork skills essential for group work and classroom participation.• Boosts self-confidence: Encourages self-expression, helping students build self-esteem and confidence, which can enhance their engagement in lessons, presentations, and other academic activities.• Supports emotional regulation: Helps students identify, understand, and manage their emotions, fostering resilience and behaviour for learning in a structured academic setting.• Fosters empathy: Through role-playing, students gain insight into others' feelings and perspectives, improving their ability to work cooperatively and understand different viewpoints in group projects.• Improves non-verbal communication: Develops body language, facial expressions, and other non-verbal cues, supporting students' ability to interpret social situations and respond appropriately, enhancing their learning environment.• Reduces anxiety and stress: Provides an outlet for emotional release, enabling students to manage anxiety and stress that may impact their academic performance and attendance.• Supports language development: Encourages the use of language in new and varied contexts, improving vocabulary, comprehension, and verbal communication skills, which are crucial for achieving progress in literacy-based EHCP targets.	
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	Dramatherapy BPS - British Psychological Society	
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Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £9,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Independent Careers support and training as part of a larger careers curriculum</p>	<p>The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has shown that careers education can enhance students' self-efficacy, self-confidence, decision-making skills, and career competencies. These improvements directly support academic progress by fostering motivation, goal-setting, and resilience, which are essential for effective learning. By engaging in careers education, students develop a clearer understanding of how their academic achievements relate to future opportunities, encouraging greater focus, effort, and attainment in subjects aligned with their aspirations.</p> <p>Additionally, careers-focused activities can support progress towards EHCP targets by promoting independence, communication skills, and structured decision-making, all of which are transferable to academic and life skills development.</p> <p>Careers education EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</p>	<p>1, 2 and 3</p>

Total budgeted cost: £49,292

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

During the 2023-24 academic year our disadvantage pupils across the school benefited greatly from our Forest School and Samba Sports provisions. Additional activities such as these helped to engage learners, develop self-esteem, capture interests and develop friendships. Our pupils in KS4/5 had the opportunity to study Forest Schools as an option subject and achieve their John Muir Award. As part of this award pupils have been working on a local heathland and have been visited by Nottinghamshire County Council to thank them for their work in rejuvenating this area. To develop this area further we will be completing work to ensure progress towards pupils ECHP targets within these provisions are shared and reviewed.

In relation to the attainment of our disadvantaged pupils we introduced a new assessment system for the 23-24 academic year. The data for core subjects in relation to our pupil premium pupils can be seen below:

Subject:	Below Target:	Just Below Target:	On Target:	Exceeding Target:
Maths:	40%	10%	30%	20%
English - Writing	10%	30%	40%	20%
English - Reading	20%	30%	30%	20%
Science	14%	14%	29%	43%

As this was a new system we have outlined through our implementation it will take a couple of academic years for staff to have expert levels of confidence and understanding as to how to best utilise the tool. Data does evidence good progression in Writing and Science for our pupil premium pupils. In relation to the pupils working below target within Maths this was mainly our KS5 pupils. In 23-24 they only had 2 lessons per-week which on reflection wasn't enough time for them to make expected levels of progress. In response to this we have adapted KS5 timetables for 24-25 to ensure they now have 3 periods of Maths per week.

All pupils in Y10 and above accessed individual careers guidance interviews throughout the academic year which helped to prepare and support them for their next steps. They also when relevant had the opportunity to participate in internal work experience opportunities. 100% of disadvantaged pupils who left us in September went onto a college placement, showing that our input supported them accordingly in ensuring they accessed appropriate next steps.

After the initial trial term of art therapy at the end of 22/23, Art Therapy was offered at Dawn House School one day per week (plus an additional session for a student who was not available on that day). This meant a total of 5 students per week were attending art therapy a total of 6 students over the year.

For children with significant communication differences, longer-term therapy is essential, as the development of a good therapeutic relationship within therapy will understandably take longer to develop and hold.

Art Therapy sessions meant that these 6 students were able to have boundaries and confidential time to explore their thoughts and feelings through art, play, metaphor, story and other creative processes. Creativity is a powerful tool to open up feelings and to safely explore them without the need to rely on words, although verbal interactions are an important aspect of therapy where available.

Students were able to explore themes such as family bereavement, managing feelings in and out of school, family dynamics, thinking about transitions in school (to new year's and key stages), tools for anxiety, exploring their sensory needs, unpacking trauma, and exploring their thoughts on identity, independence and sense of self.

Parents and class staff have reported many students presenting with reduced emotional distress, fewer instances of dysregulation in and out of school, and better social interactions and engagement with others. Most students concluded their work last year; a small number have carried therapy forward into this academic year to enable more time to explore their therapeutic needs.

Through the work of our wellbeing team, therapy team and the pastoral support delivered by all staff at Dawn House School our disadvantage pupils are supported wherever required, with self-regulation promoted and pupils have ever increasing levels of independence and resilience throughout the school.

An area to develop over the coming year in relation to our pupil premium information will be the specific data in relation to pupil premium pupil qualification achievements. We have amended our tracking systems so this data is readily available and this will be detailed in next years report.

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you purchased in the previous academic year. This will help the Department for Education identify which ones are popular in England

Programme	Provider
N/A	N/A

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information:

Measure	Details
How did you spend your service pupil premium allocation last academic year?	N/A
What was the impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils?	N/A

Further information (optional)

Use this space to provide any further information about your pupil premium strategy. For example, about your strategy planning, or other activity that you are implementing to support disadvantaged pupils, that is not dependent on pupil premium or recovery premium funding.