

## Pupil Premium Strategy update January 2021

The school has drawn up a strategy for the deployment of the Pupil Premium funding in 2020-21; the impact of the actions will be measured termly and where appropriate modifications may be made to the provision funded through the Pupil Premium. The evaluation of the impact has taken into consideration both the school's internal review processes including all stakeholders, alongside external reviews which have been used to obtain different perspectives.

### **A. A significant number of disadvantaged pupils, notably in Year 9 and Year 10 have lower literacy skills than non-disadvantaged pupils; this prevents the disadvantaged pupils making good progress.**

- Whole school literacy action plan has been developed to help improve the lower literacy skills of all pupils with a sharp focus on those from a disadvantaged background. Interventions are targeted based on need in the first instance informed by those who are significantly below their chronological reading age and then disadvantaged pupils being prioritised. A range of approaches are or have been deployed including reciprocal reading, Accelerated Reader, Bedrock Vocabulary and additional intervention using the ARROW program. Some of these have had to be refined, adapted or delayed as the school continues to respond to the government guidance as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Cognitive ability assessments have been carried out for year 7 pupils. Due to the first lockdown this cohort did not sit their SAT's exams, therefore the school has limited data to deploy appropriate literacy or numeracy-based strategies. These assessments provide an insight into a pupil's ability to reason across 4 disciplines: verbal, non-verbal, mathematical and spatial reasoning. It is intended that disadvantaged pupils who require additional support will be identified by the English and maths departments, this is alongside their own subject specific assessments to ensure that appropriate support is being deployed in a timely manner. Interventions were due to start; however, the national restrictions have delayed these plans, although, class teachers continue to differentiate and provide relevant support during the lessons.
- Accelerated Reader continues to be the main form of literacy intervention for pupils in years 7 and 8; this has had to be adapted due to the current restrictions. They are now taking the form of class reciprocal reading sessions delivered by specialist English teachers, with 30 minutes of structured comprehension, focussing on reading skills followed by 30 minutes of grammar focused skills. It is important to note, that although the school continues to feel that this strategy is providing value for money, unfortunately, due to the coronavirus pandemic, there has been increased pupil absence due to them having to self-isolate, either due to displaying symptoms or being identified as a close contact. This has therefore impacted on the number of pupils completing the STAR reading tests. At the last data collection point in November, the average reading age for all year 7 pupils was 9:08 years, approximately 18 months behind the cohort's average actual age. Disadvantaged pupils are currently, on average 4 months behind the non-disadvantaged cohort. In terms of the average reading age for year 8 pupils, this is 10:08 years. Since the previous test in February 2020, year 8 have made little progress but this could be in part due to the lack of formal education the pupils received for this time period. However, it is interesting to note that the disadvantaged pupils have now increased their reading ages by 5 months on average, and as a result are now in line with their non-disadvantaged peers. This will continue to be monitored; however, it is

likely that the literacy gap may unfortunately widen if the January 2021 lockdown continues for a prolonged period of time. The school is continuing to evaluate and develop appropriate strategies in order to minimise this effect and the investment in class teachers delivering live lessons using the Microsoft Teams platform, will most definitely help to reduce the disproportionate effect on the education of the disadvantaged pupils.

- It is clear that through a range of evidence, in order for pupils to comprehend a piece of text, they must have a thorough understanding of the vocabulary within the text. Therefore, resources continue to be deployed into Bedrock learning in order to promote a word-rich culture. At the last data collection point in November, 263 pupils across year 7-10 completed at least one lesson topic block (6 lessons, a pre-test and a post-test.) As a result, the pupils have improved their vocabulary knowledge by an average of 31%. In terms of the disadvantaged pupils alone, 94 of the 263 are classed as eligible for Pupil Premium funding. It is important that they continue to be prioritised, as it is clear when looking at the vocabulary knowledge, an increase of 35% was seen in disadvantaged pupils compared to an average 28% increase made by pupils who are non-disadvantaged. Currently appropriate pupils who are significantly below their chronological reading age will be identified in order to increase engagement; a further update will be provided in the next review.
- In order to ensure the school has the most up to date and accurate reading age data, online reading tests have been purchased with the intention of these being completed at the earliest opportunity. It was hoped that they would be done during the Spring term for pupils in years 7-10, however due to the current government restrictions this has had to be delayed. When able to carry out these assessments, it will allow the intervention strategies being deployed to be refined. This will be in line with the standardised literacy approach which is a school priority.

**B. Disadvantaged pupils, particularly from the middle prior attainment band, are making less progress than other pupils from the same prior attainment band in some subjects in KS4, particularly mathematics and the EBACC subjects (geography, history and modern foreign languages). Alongside this, ensure that disadvantaged boys are supported and challenged to achieve in line with their non-disadvantaged peers.**

- In terms of attainment data for the current year 11, it is important to outline that the predictions that staff have made are not taking in to account any leniency that might be shown in terms of teacher assessments or lower grade boundaries. This is because at the time of data entry, the details were not published and lacked clarity. Therefore, these predictions are based on the last grade boundaries of GCSE exams in June 2019.
- At the last data collection before the Christmas break, 18% of pupils are predicted to achieve the basics measure for grade 5 or above compared to 30% in 2019-20. A further 22 pupils are achieving in one subject but not the other; if all these pupils were to convert, this would equate to 40%. It is important that these pupils continue to be prioritised with teachers in English and maths. If this was realised over the coming months then it would be slightly higher than the FFT20 estimates, this stands at 34%. Realistically considering that 37 pupils achieved the government's expected benchmark at KS2 (scaled score of approximately 100), it is these pupils that are being targeted to ensure they make expected progress.

- In terms of the basics measure for 9-4, 44% are predicted to achieve this measure compared to 53% in 2019-20. This would be slightly below the FFT20 estimate of 60%, although as with the grade 5 and above, a further 26 pupils are achieving in one subject but not the other. It is this cohort of pupils that will be targeted over the coming months.
- In terms of other subjects, triple science continues to predict strongly however, the percentage of pupils achieving a grade 5 in combined science remains a focus, 21% compared to the teacher assessed grades of 35% in 2020.
- Humanities subjects are predicting 50% of disadvantaged pupils achieving a grade 4, both in geography and history. In terms of the grade 5 and better, this is slightly lower, 38% for history and 29% for geography.
- Languages are predicting strongly when considering the grade 5 or better, 63% French, 64% Spanish and 75% Urdu. In terms of grade 4, 100% in French and Spanish, with Urdu predicting 83%. It is important to note that these are small cohorts of less than 12, therefore one pupil moving up or down a grade boundary can result in large fluctuations.
- Additional intervention strategies continue to be implemented throughout school, this is both after school and during form time registration. This includes Raising Achievement English and maths forms and additional core subjects revision as a compulsory period 6. As in the previous academic year, the Quality of Education team have identified key pupils based on monitoring data inputted by subject teachers and leaders. Of the 60 pupils receiving this intervention from highly skilled practitioners, including Lead Practitioners, 32 of these pupils are classed as disadvantaged. In terms of predictions, 30 of the 32 are predicted to achieve the basics measure in terms of grade 4 (23 mocks), with 19 predicted to achieve it in terms of grade 5 (7 mocks).
- A small cohort of 10 pupils have also received an additional 10 lessons using the online tutoring company MyTutor, uptake has been extremely positive with pupils attending 80% of lessons. Alongside this, the school has also committed to The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) which is a government-funded initiative that aims to make high-quality tutoring available to schools, at a heavily subsidised rate. The aim is to help disadvantaged pupils whose education has been affected by school closures. Westborough has committed to offering this to an additional 60 pupils in year 10 and 11, however the most recent national lockdown has delayed the start date. It is hoped that this will commence in March 2021 and the school is liaising with MyTutor who it is hoped will facilitate this start date.
- Whole school CPD sessions have continued this academic year which have had to be responsive due to the ever-changing circumstances as a result of pupils having to self-isolate and therefore an increase in remote learning. Some sessions that have been covered to improve quality first teaching are:
  - a) Effective strategies to make remote learning effective including live lessons (synchronous) and recorded lessons (asynchronous) approaches
  - b) Departmental planning time to ensure where pupils are not in school appropriate work is being set which is in line with the existing curriculum plans in school
  - c) Collaborative work scrutiny to establish curriculum coverage including class teachers and subject leaders looking at the gaps in knowledge as a result of remote learning
  - d) Recently there has been a renewed focus on pupils '*know more and remember more?*' using *meaningful and manageable teacher feedback*
- As the delivery of education changes the CPD needs continue to be adapted with a responsive approach including adding additional capacity in terms of deployment of an Advanced Practitioner to support with ensuring pupils receive high quality remote learning. Resources and best practice are being collated and are being shared as part

of the whole school CPD strategy. Any new strategies are being tested and trialled before adopting them as a whole school approach. However, staff are being encouraged to try the new platforms and features on Microsoft Teams to avoid stifling their enthusiasm as CPD needs are varied dependent on familiarity with IT software and hardware. Recently this has also included sharing strategies such as using a mobile device as a visualiser or the use of break out rooms to provide small group support or promoting high quality conversation.

**C. Low aspirations and self-esteem for a number of pupil premium pupils across all year groups is having a detrimental impact on their academic progress.**

- Aspirational and enrichment activities have been limited as a result of the pandemic; however, this does not mean that this area has not been prioritised. It is evident through the attainment data that disadvantaged pupils have lower attainment than their non-disadvantaged peers. The increasing need for pupils having to self-isolate along with the recent school closures has meant the disadvantaged gap continues to widen. Disadvantaged pupils are less likely to have access to technology, in turn spend less time learning and are likely to have reduced support from parents/carers compared to their non-disadvantaged peers. As a result, implementing Microsoft Teams and levelling the playing field in terms of access to technology has been prioritised over the last term by pastoral staff.
- A systematic process has been implemented including surveying pupils, ordering devices as per the local authority process and delivering to homes. As a result, a total of 155 laptops have been loaned out to disadvantaged pupils who require them. This includes all the year 11 disadvantaged pupils, 80 of the 95 disadvantaged pupils being provided with a laptop, although 2 devices have had to be replaced due to damage. At the time of writing, the limited remaining stock was being prepared with staff continuing to request more devices from the local authority as demand increases. The local authority has advised that they have seen a surge in demand from all schools in the area as a result of the national restrictions; they are awaiting further delivery from the Department for Education.
- Currently at the moment, those disadvantaged pupils who have requested a device have been provided with one, although if the requests continue, the school will quickly run out of laptops. Therefore, a non-digital approach has also been planned by departments to ensure the medium of delivery doesn't hinder the most disadvantaged. To date 110 paper-based packs have been requested, 61 of them who are classed as being disadvantaged. Also, as the school is made aware of innovative ways to access remote learning such as using an Xbox and PlayStation, this has been shared with pupils and parents either via letters, emails from Progress/Year Leaders and updating resources on the school website.
- A parent survey conducted recently to gauge pupils' access to internet resulted in 260 parents responding. Analysis from this shows that 82 pupils do not have adequate broadband, 47 of whom are classed as disadvantaged. Roughly 10%-15% of the disadvantaged cohort approximately, although it is anticipated that this figure will increase as the restrictions remain, this will continue to be monitored with regular communication with parents as personal circumstances are changing quickly.
- To provide good access, contact has been made with the Department for Education and a request for 64 pupils who did not have access at the time of asking made. A response has not been received to date; upon response the school will request support for a further 18 pupils. In the meantime, the school has secured 80 data sim cards (30Gb data over 90 days) to be distributed based on receipt of Pupil Premium funding and key

stage. However, there is no stock of the Wi-Fi dongles, therefore these sim cards would need to replace parents/pupils existing sim cards in their mobile phones which is not ideal.

- The school continues to focus on developing and implementing strategies which minimise disruption to learning. Existing processes have been adapted due to the zonal system having to be implemented. The presence of Year Leaders in specific areas has meant that pupils have access to them at the beginning and end of each lesson. As a result the strong relationships has allowed Year Leaders and Progress Leaders to support, encourage and motivate pupils, in turn minimise possible low level disruption. Behaviour statistics will be reported on over the next term as staff are working hard making welfare calls, visits and providing support to pupils and parents to access remote learning currently, and early indications show an improvement.

**D. Attendance for pupils eligible for pupil premium is 93% (below the target for all pupils of 95%) and persistent absence (10%) is 19%; this reduces their school hours and impacts on learning and progress.**

- In terms of percentage absence (target 5%) for disadvantaged pupils, this has increased to 11.8% compared to 7% up until December last year. When comparing this to the non-disadvantaged cohort, it is significantly higher as the absence for them stands at 7%. Although, the absence of the non-disadvantaged pupils has also increased by 3% when compared to last year, currently 7% compared to 4% last year. It is important that the school continues to use being classed as disadvantaged as an indicator to identify pupils who are at greater risk of poor attendance. However, it is necessary to strike a fine balance between supporting families who have concerns due to underlying health conditions during this pandemic but challenge when education is not being valued.
- In terms of those pupils who are already classed as persistently absent, this is significantly higher at 9.13% compared to 4.77% last year. When compared to the non-disadvantaged cohort, this stands at 3.79% compared to 2.1% at the same point last year. It is clear that the sharp focus on the disadvantaged pupils' attendance is required, thus the Strategic Lead for Pupil Premium is working closely with the pastoral team in order to add additional leadership but also a mentoring approach for pupils and families. When there has been a genuine requirement to self-isolate, pupils in receipt of free school meals (FSM) have been contacted and in accordance with the LA protocols provided with either a food box or vouchers including during the school holidays.
- A range of tailored strategies have been implemented for this academic year balancing education and health needs. This has included a revised tracking system, system to monitor and reduce spread of Covid-19, regular meetings involving pastoral staff, local authority and school nurse. The overall objective due to the current national lockdown is to engage pupils' access and engagement to remote learning with those who have been identified with poor attendance in the autumn being targeted as a key group. Alongside the Pupil Premium strategic lead is also triangulating attainment and attendance and tracking a core of group of year 10 pupils as these pupils will have little or no allowances when they sit their GCSE exams in 2022.

**Areas for development**

- Continue to provide support in order to minimise the significant impact that school closures and absence has on pupil's life chances. Prioritise, ensuring pupils have access to support when they cannot attend school, this includes help with reengaging back into school, providing digital access support or free school meals. Where there is

poor attendance a personalised approach is being implemented to minimise the effects of missed learning on pupil's life chances through high quality remote lessons.

- It is important that the profile of literacy remains high even during these changing times not only in terms of academic development but also in terms of self-esteem and future life changes as reported in the Oxford Language Report 2018. Strategies such as Accelerated Reader and Bedrock are a priority at the moment offering routine and continuing the vocabulary development of pupils as it is fundamental to learning.
- Strengthen the consistency of quality first teaching, not only during the traditional classroom environment but also transfer these skills to deliver high quality remote education which is a blend of synchronous (live lessons) and asynchronous (independent learning using pre-prepared resources) learning approaches. As a result of this investment CPD time in this area, it will also strengthen the offer in the long term with the school's expectations of catching up with work missed. This is alongside ensuring that pupils are supported when they are back in school and early identification of those who have fallen behind so that appropriate intervention strategies can be implemented.