



## **Westborough High School Catch Up Premium Strategy 2020-2021**

Pupils have experienced unprecedented disruption to their education as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). Those from the most vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds will be among those hardest hit nationally. This will have a direct impact on Westborough High School as approximately 47% of the school cohort are from a disadvantaged background.

The government announced additional funding in 2020-21 to support children and young people catch up, particularly those classed as disadvantaged. This was provided in 3 tranches over the 2020-21 academic year. In accordance with the government guidance, evidence-based approaches from organisations such as the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) have been selected to ensure the school gets best value for money. In order to track and monitor these interventions they were categorised as teaching and whole school strategies, targeted approaches and wider strategies.

The total amount of funding allocated is £74,240 based on 928 pupils on roll, at a rate £80 per pupil. Please see below the summary of the expenditure and the impact of the strategies deployed.

### **Teaching and whole school strategies**

- **IT provision including network capacity** - High quality teaching is the single most important lever which will improve pupil outcomes. In accordance with government guidance and as a result of the national lockdown, ensuring pupils had access to learning remotely was a school priority. It was decided that Microsoft Teams would offer the features that would enable teachers to deliver live lessons remotely, set work, engage with pupils to check for understanding and review the work that has been completed by pupils. It was imperative that this was of high quality so that pupils did not become disengaged with the learning. The focus was ensuring we developed and adapted effective teaching practices but also guaranteed that the hardware/software being used in school did not hinder this process by providing a poor user experience. In order to meet this priority, the school invested in the following:
  - Outsourcing testing of the network capacity by specialist network technicians to ensure that the network was fit for purpose. It was essential that there was high speed internet and data transfer capacity to avoid any lag or loss of connection when teaching lessons. Initial remedial work was prioritised with further comprehensive analysis of the network capacity in the spring term which pointed on that the WIFI network routers are now obsolete and will need replacing in the near future. Some funding has been kept back so that this can then be upgraded during the academic year.
  - Upgrading to solid state hard drives on teacher computers in school ensured that the hardware is able to cope with the additional processing demands of Microsoft Teams. In order to respond swiftly to the challenging educational landscape this analysis of hardware was outsourced in order to reduce the impact on pupils learning. This enabled teachers to have multiple windows open, share their screens and deliver high quality engaging lessons to pupils.



- Purchase of webcams and microphones for each classroom to ensure lessons could be taught remotely as the vast majority of existing computers did not have these functions.
- Investment into software and support to ensure the software infrastructure is future proofed so that there is integration between the Sims and Microsoft platforms which will sync with pupils and staff timetables to Microsoft Teams. This will be integrated over the academic year.
- Investment into adding capacity to developing a virtual private network system for staff to work remotely using specialist software alongside initial implementation of access to cloud-based platforms such as OneDrive to allow pupils and staff to access work. Specialist support from an IT company helped the school implement this system in the first instance.
- Teachers heavily rely on the whiteboard and pen to help pupils learn. Discussions and clear instruction helps pupils know more and remember more. However, teaching remotely reduced this ability, so upgrading and providing resources which mitigated this were invested in. This included the trial purchase of a few graphics tablets and ensuring that all teachers had access to a visualiser. This combined with the screen sharing facility of Microsoft Teams helped staff to have quality conversation, annotate and improve the clarity of instruction when teaching remotely. Further investment will still need to be made in terms of interactive whiteboards over this academic year in some classrooms so that in the event that pupils are isolating they can have as close to a classroom lesson experience as possible.
- **Additional testing** - Cognitive ability assessments were carried out for year 7 pupils to inform class teachers on the pupil's ability. This then ensured appropriate targeted support could be provided if required. Due to the first lockdown in March 2020 the current year 7 cohort did not sit their SAT's exams in year 6, therefore the school had limited data to deploy appropriate literacy or numeracy-based strategies. These diagnostic assessments provided an insight into a pupil's ability to reason across 4 disciplines: verbal, non-verbal, mathematical and spatial reasoning. Those pupils significantly below the expected levels, particularly the disadvantaged pupils were identified by the English and maths departments for additional intervention as part of the whole school literacy focus. As we moved in to the autumn term this data was used to support pupils with specific in class literacy and numeracy strategies. Roles and responsibilities were reallocated to ensure that when there were subject specific assessments, pupils who were significantly below were supported throughout the year to address the gaps in knowledge and misconceptions.
- **Diagnostic assessments** - When considering the amount of missed learning, not only due to the two national lockdowns but also pupils self-isolating throughout the year it is important teachers were regularly using diagnostic assessment to reflect on pupils' strengths and weaknesses. In order to support teaching staff and leaders with workload two software programmes were purchased. Firstly, the Pupil Progress system allowed teachers and leaders to track live progress of pupils in individual classes. The platform consists of ready-to-use trackers which calculates accurate student grades in line with the exam board specifications and individual paper weightings. These can then inform predictions for monitoring and actions going forward. Alongside this a specific piece of software was purchased for leaders who can then look at the performance data and



help improve outcomes. Collecting data without analysing it in a timely manner limits this impact. Thus the purchase of the Smid Reporting system has helped leaders both at departmental and senior level focus on the actions rather than spending time doing statistical calculations and identifying pupils who require support.

- **CPD to develop remote learning** – Additional capacity was created for an Advanced Practitioner to research and develop the most effective teaching practices to deliver high quality remote learning. This involved utilising the expertise in school, collaborating with the EdTech Demonstrator school and staying abreast with software updates. This also included developing resources which adapted traditional teaching practices. These were regularly disseminated to staff and as a result, the school developed the confidence of teachers to use this technology. This then enhanced the school's ability to offer live teaching to pupils, providing high quality teaching in the event that pupils had to self-isolate or during the January lockdown. On occasions systems were put in place where specialist staff could teach from home when they were identified as a close contact.

### Targeted support

- **Tuition** - As part of the governments National Tutoring Programme, the school invested in catch up tutoring, working with the NTP partner MyTutor. The sessions were subsidised by 75% and aimed to provide additional support to pupils alongside the high-quality learning in school. The programme chosen was a 3-1 model in either English or mathematics. A total of 60 pupils (30 year 11 and 30 year 10) were chosen to take part, of which 39 are disadvantaged. As part of this programme, tuition happened online and each pupil received a total of 15 lessons. Funding was split between Pupil Premium and the catch-up funding. Subject leaders used diagnostic assessments to inform tutors on topics that needed to be covered as a result of missed learning or where there were gaps in knowledge. The selection of pupils focussed on ensuring a greater proportion of pupils meet the Governments basics measure which is a standard or strong pass in English and maths, disadvantaged pupils were given priority. Attendance to this programme was 89%, primarily due to the diligent work of the Pupil Premium Strategic Lead who reminded parents before each lesson, even on weekends. It is hoped that this commitment to additional catch up lessons continues, particularly for the year 10 pupils who look forward to their final year at secondary school.
- **Academic Mentoring** - As part of the governments initiative to support pupils with missed learning, Westborough High School were assigned an Academic Mentor in English. The costs of this was covered as part of the governments recovery strategies, but small shortfall of the 'on costs' such as pension contributions were covered using the catch up funding. Year 10 pupils benefitted from the one to one support, however the limitation and the deployment late in to the academic year minimised the potential impact that this strategy could have had.



## Wider Strategies

- **Parents Evenings** - Due to the government restrictions in school, traditional parent's evenings did not take place. It is clear that when schools involve parents in supporting their children's academic learning, it has a positive impact in terms of an average of 4 months' additional progress as per the Education Endowment Foundations research. When considering this in a secondary school setting, it is actually 2 months for pupils, with a greater impact on literacy and lower attaining pupils. When considering the low literacy levels on entry for a large proportion of pupils at Westborough, regularly liaising with parents was imperative to help reduce the gap due to Covid-19 and help support families. To help overcome the restrictions, School Cloud a web based platform was purchased allowing parents to meet virtually with teachers and discuss the attainment of their child. Uptake was good with on average 81% attending these meetings.
- **Resources** - Additional funding was used to support the most disadvantaged pupils with revision guides so that they are able to independently use this resource to catch up with missed work. This was complemented with the use of recorded lessons and explanations with pupils receiving guidance from their subject teachers.
- **Low self-esteem and emotional resilience** - Those pupils who required additional emotional support due to low self-esteem or mental health issues as a result of the pandemic were supported by specialist staff, particularly adding capacity to the role of the Family Liaison Officer.