

Pupil premium strategy statement

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery premium for the 2025 to 2026 academic year) funding to help improve the attainment of our disadvantaged students.

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	Helena Romanes School
Number of students in school (Year 7 - 11)	1161
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible students	168 (14.5%)
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2023/24 to 2026/2027
Date this statement was published	September 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	Catherine Davis
Pupil premium lead	Chris Allom
Governor / Trustee lead	Mark Hayes

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£ 225,280
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£ 0
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	£ 225,280

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent- YEAR 1-3 VISION

Our intention is that all students, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, make strong progress and are successful across the curriculum. The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged students to achieve that goal, including progress for those who are already high achievers.

We have considered the unique challenges faced by our disadvantaged students, including the most vulnerable students, using this information to underpin and inform the range of strategies we are implementing.

The strategies outlined in this statement are intended to complement and support the whole school strategies to raise the expectations and outcomes of all students, whether they are disadvantaged or not. Our strategy will look to progressively close the gap in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students. We recognise that any effective strategy to address educational disadvantage needs to avoid short term ‘fixes’ and instead be embedded at the heart of school culture. Therefore, we have a series of targets that build incrementally over a period of three years to address the students' needs. One of the key pillars in this strategy will be a continual review process that allows the school to monitor and review the effectiveness of this strategy, whilst being able to respond to the changing needs of our students.

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

Our approach will be responsive to the common challenges and individual needs, rooted in robust diagnostic assessment, not assumptions about the impact of disadvantage. To ensure they are effective we will:

- ensure disadvantaged students are exposed to constantly high quality teaching that challenges them to make outstanding progress.
- act early to intervene at the point need is identified
- adopt a whole school approach in which all staff take responsibility for disadvantaged students' outcomes and raise expectations of what they can achieve.

Challenges

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

Challenge	Detail of challenge)
1	On average, our disadvantaged students have <u>lower prior attainment</u> when they join the school compared to their non-disadvantaged peers DA avg EM KS2 CATs 99.96 and a reading age of 9 years and 8 months compared to non-DA students who have scores of 104.63 and 10 years 10 months respectively.
2	Our observations and data analyses show that a minority of disadvantaged students present particularly <u>challenging behaviour</u>
3	Our records show that disadvantaged students get <u>less involved in school and extracurricular activities, and undertake fewer positions of responsibility.</u>

4	Attendance of disadvantaged students is lower than their non-disadvantaged peers (84.18% compared to 90.63%).
5	Engagement from the parents/carers of disadvantaged students is more mixed than from their non-disadvantaged peers. This includes attendance at Parents Evenings, where in previous years DA attendance has been approximately 10% lower than those who are non-DA.
6 7	Our assessments and observations have shown that the progress of disadvantaged students at the school has suffered the most due to the impact of Covid-19. Our assessment, observations and discussion with DA students and families have shown an increase in students' social, emotional and mental health needs . This has been exacerbated by the impact of Covid-19.
8	Disadvantaged students enter the school with a lower chronological reading age compared to non-disadvantaged students. Research suggests that disadvantaged students may struggle to access the required GCSE texts.
9	Disadvantaged students often lack the high aspirations demonstrated by many of their non-disadvantaged peers.
10	Some of our disadvantaged students have joined us from other countries and have English as an Additional Language .

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 2023-24	Success criteria 2024-25	Success criteria 2025-26
KS4 progress gap to reduce	(2022/23 DA P8 -0.81, gap -0.39) Close the gap between DA and - Non-DA students to -0.30.	Due to the legacy of Covid, Progress 8 scores will not be available in 2024-25. Therefore the target has been set that DA students will be within 25% of the 4+ 5+ and 7+ EM measures non-DA students.	Due to the legacy of Covid, Progress 8 scores will not be available in 2025-26. Therefore the target has been set that DA students will be within 20% of the 4+, 5+ and 7+ EM measures of non-DA students.
KS3 Progress gap across the core subjects to close	Reduce the gap in attainment in core subjects between DA and non-DA students by 15% in each subject per year group.	Reduce the gap in attainment in core subjects between DA and non-DA students by a further 15% in each subject per year group.	To close the gap in attainment between DA and non DA students in core subjects across all years.

<p>To improve the overall reading age of DA students</p>	<p>To close the gap in chronological reading ages between DA and non DA students to less than <u>1 year</u>.</p>	<p>To close the gap in chronological reading ages between DA and non DA students to less than 9 months.</p>	<p>To close the gap in chronological reading ages between DA and non DA students to less than 6 months.</p>
<p>Reduced suspensions for disadvantaged students.</p>	<p>In 2022/23 25% of DA students in Yr11 received 3 or more B2 (now B3) in a year, 29% received 1 day or more in isolation and 29% received 1 or more days FTE.</p> <p>We aim to reduce this figure by 5% in each category.</p>	<p>We aim to reduce this figure by 10% in each category compared to the 2022/23 levels.</p>	<p>We aim to reduce this figure by 15% in each category compared to the 2022/23 levels.</p>
<p>Improved attendance of disadvantaged students</p>	<p>Narrow the gap in attendance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students to less than 7%.</p>	<p>Narrow the gap in attendance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students to less than 6%.</p>	<p>Narrow the gap in attendance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students to less than 5%.</p>
<p>Improved engagement with the parents of disadvantaged students</p>	<p>60% of all disadvantaged student's parents attend Parents' Evening/ attendance is within 10% of non-disadvantaged peers.</p>	<p>70% of all disadvantaged student's parents attend Parents' Evening/ attendance is within 5% of non-disadvantaged peers.</p>	<p>80% of all disadvantaged student's parents attend Parents' Evening/ attendance is in line with non-disadvantaged peers.</p>

<p>To provide effective social, emotional and mental health support for students</p> <p>To ensure that all disadvantaged students have high aspirations as a result of receiving high quality Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG).</p> <p>Disadvantaged students participate in a wider range of trips, clubs and visits, as well as taking on more positions of responsibility in school.</p>	<p>80% of students who have received support from the LRC demonstrate sustained improvements (especially in attendance)</p> <p>70% of all DA students attend extra curricular clubs.</p> <p>All DA students in year 11 receive a careers meeting.</p> <p>40% of DA students in Year 9/10 receive early careers appointments.</p> <p>Disadvantaged students' attendance at clubs and trips is within 10% of non-disadvantaged students.</p>	<p>85% of students who have received support from the LRC demonstrate sustained improvements (especially in attendance)</p> <p>75% of all DA students attend extra curricular clubs.</p> <p>All DA students in year 11 receive a careers meeting.</p> <p>60% of DA students in Year 9/10 receive early careers appointments.</p> <p>Disadvantaged students' attendance at clubs and trips is within 5% of non-disadvantaged students.</p>	<p>90% of students who have received support from the LRC demonstrate sustained improvements (especially in attendance)</p> <p>80% of all DA students attend extra curricular clubs.</p> <p>All DA students in year 11 receive a careers meeting.</p> <p>80% of DA students in Year 9/10 receive early careers appointments.</p> <p>Disadvantaged students' attendance at clubs and trips is in line with non-disadvantaged students.</p>
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Activity in this academic year (2023-24)

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

1 Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £76,280

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
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<p>Ensure DA students are placed in classes with subjects specialists in core subjects.</p> <p>Key information and strategies delivered on a weekly basis through 'required reading'. Introduction of a 'Premium Pupil of the week', which highlights strategies to support key Yr11 students.</p> <p>Each Yr11 DA student has an individualised support plan to maximise their potential. PPC to monitor and support students in conduct with HOY, RSL and form tutors.</p> <p>Progress of DA students is monitored closely by examining data points, and through conducting targeted learning walks and book scrutiny.</p>	<p>The EEF recognises the quality of teaching to be the biggest factor in determining the outcomes of all students including DA students.</p>	<p>1,2,6</p>
<p>Develop a shared vision for effective teaching and learning, underpinned by high-quality, tailored CPD.</p>	<p>Consistently high quality teaching leads to better outcomes.</p> <p>Staff to be given regular high quality CPD led by the Teaching and learning lead.</p>	<p>1,2,6</p>
<p>Ensure staff put DA and SEND students at the heart of their planning and teaching. PPC to run CPD sessions to promote inclusion of key vulnerable students and raise the profile of these students with the school community.</p> <p>Raising the profile of DA students by providing a photowall of DA students in 'required reading'. Regular communication in staff briefing to maintain the profile of DA students.</p> <p>DA students to be placed in 'premium seats' in seating plans. This could be at the front of a class, strategically placed next to a good role model, but it is a place in which a teacher can access a student easily, or works to that student's advantage.</p>	<p>The EEF highlights the importance of highlighting the individual disadvantaged students' needs to allow for tailored solutions.</p>	<p>1,2,4,6</p>

<p>To continue to ensure the KS3 and KS4 curriculum remains broad with schemes of work challenging and sequenced to enable disadvantaged students to make progress.</p> <p>Additionally to ensure that the curriculum is adapted to meet the challenges caused by the pandemic.</p>	<p>Experience suggests that having a challenging curriculum is the foundation that underpins high quality teaching and learning, which in turn leads to high quality outcomes for students.</p>	<p>1,3,6,8</p>
<p>Routine CAT testing and follow-up responses.</p>	<p>The CAT testing has enabled the school to identify a clear starting point for Year 7 students, particularly disadvantaged students.</p>	<p>1,6</p>
<p>Improving literacy in all subject areas in line with the recommendations by the EEF.</p> <p>Professional development focussed on improving the literacy of all students. Staff training provided by the literacy coordinators introducing reading comprehension into all subjects. CPD training provided by Literacy Champions based around the Frayer model.</p> <p>Introduction of a guided reading programme into tutor groups.</p> <p>Reading intervention programme used to support targeted students with low reading ages. Each child to be supported on a daily basis. The most vulnerable students such as, PP, SEND, LAC and PLAC students will be prioritised for these programmes.</p>	<p>Evidence from the EEF suggests that students with low reading levels often fail to access the curriculum fully and this becomes a significant barrier to achievement.</p>	<p>1,6,8</p>

2 Targeted academic support (for example, tutoring, one-to-one support structured interventions)

Budgeted cost: £65,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Develop and improve the mentoring programmes to provide pastoral support.</p> <p>PPC provides mentoring for our most vulnerable DA students, in conjunction with HoY, RSL, and Pastoral staff.</p>	<p>We are experiencing an increased number of Social services and CAMHS referrals. Our mentoring and student support services are essential in supporting well-being and achievement.</p>	<p>5,7</p>

	The DfE has found that, on average, children with higher levels of emotional, behavioural, social and school wellbeing had higher levels of academic achievement.	
PPC to withdraw students from tutor time to provide academic intervention, supporting students with revision and organisational strategies.	Evidence from the EEF suggests that 1-1 and small group tutoring results in students making accelerated progress	5,7
Provide 1-1 or small group tutoring/withdrawal for students in core subjects using overstaffing. Key DA students to be withdrawn from core PE lessons, as appropriate, to receive additional support in English and Maths.	Evidence from the EEF suggests that 1-1 and small group tutoring results in students making accelerated progress	5,7
Each Yr11 DA student will have a tailored revision plan to support them with any individual barriers they may face.	Disadvantaged students often do not make expected progress both nationally and locally, as a result of complex factors	4, 6, 7
Learning Recovery Centre (LRC)- to provide a tailored alternative education provision for vulnerable students. Key Yr11 DA students to receive alternative provision where appropriate, such as Pre-Plan B and the organisation of work experience placements.	Disadvantaged students often do not make expected progress both nationally and locally, as a result of complex factors Both the LRC and Pre-plan B have a track record in success when supporting students facing complex difficulties.	4, 6, 7
Disadvantaged students are encouraged to attend additional impact sessions. PPC to monitor rates of attendance. Disadvantaged students meet PPC to catch up and discuss progress throughout the year. To support disadvantaged students with organisational skills and ensure disadvantaged students have access to the resources and equipment required to be successful.	The school has found that there is a strong correlation between attendance to impact sessions and students outcomes. Evidence from SIMS has shown that DA students accrue some behaviour points for equipment.	1, 5, 6,7 2, 6
Form time intervention activities to be provided. Tutors to prioritise disadvantaged students.	The school has had success in the past in using intervention tutor groups to close the achievement gap.	1, 6

<p>Pastoral Leaders (including the employment of an additional PL via Recovery Premium funding), LRC staff and councillors to actively monitor the behaviour and well-being of disadvantaged students through reports, tracking on SIMS and learning walks. Staff to make regular contact with parents where necessary.</p>	<p>There is a strong correlation between well-being and levels of attendance, which in turn affects student outcomes. Experience has shown that disadvantaged students benefit from increased levels of support from members of staff.</p>	<p>2, 6,7</p>
<p>Tutoring to be provided for key Yr11 students in English, Maths and Science as appropriate to support the outcomes in these subjects.</p> <p>Academy 21 will be used to support students that are following an adapted timetable, or who are struggling to access the curriculum.</p>	<p>Evidence from the EEF suggests that 1-1 and small group tutoring results in students making accelerated progress.</p>	<p>1, 6, 8</p>

<p>Students will be offered the use of the Learning Zone after school to have a warm conducive environment to study.</p> <p>DA students to be provided with appropriate revision materials as and when required. E.g. Revision guides, Seneca subscriptions, cue cards, highlights etc.</p>	<p>Experience suggests that sometimes DA students, particularly in Yr11, do not always have access to a quiet space to revise or the materials necessary for effective revision, therefore the school aims to remove this barrier.</p>	<p>1,6</p>
<p>We have several students that have joined us as refugees who have English as an additional language, and are therefore struggling to access the curriculum in English.</p> <p>Key vocabulary banks to be provided for subjects with specialist terminology.</p> <p>Students to be provided with English to first language dictionaries, or access to a Chromebook as appropriate.</p>	<p>Research into the best ways to support our EAL students has been sought by consulting organisations such as the British Council and Refugee Council. Additionally support and expertise has been utilised from within the Saffron Walden Academy Trust.</p>	<p>8,10</p>

SENCO, HOY, PPC to work with feeder primary schools to help ensure a smooth transition from primary to secondary education.	Experience has shown that a positive start to school for students makes a big impact on confidence and settling into a new school.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
PPC to meet/contact disadvantaged student's parents regularly.	Having regular contact with parents will improve engagement. Disadvantaged student's parents will be kept up to date with important dates such as exams and parents evenings.	2, 3, 4, 5
Disadvantaged students will have priority access to careers interviews.	Disadvantaged students will have priority access to careers interviews. CA/ABS to review and support DA students with options choices. Greater access to next-step advice is proven to improve aspiration and motivation in school.	9
A contingency fund will be used to quickly respond to essential items for disadvantaged students may suddenly need.	Experience has shown that disadvantaged students may need access to support on an immediate basis to help resolve unexpected situations.	All

Total budgeted cost: £ 225, 280

Part B: Review of outcomes in the previous academic year

Pupil premium strategy outcomes

This details the impact that our pupil premium activity had on students in the 2023 to 2024 academic year.

- In relation to student progress, the 2024-25 performance of DA students at the end of KS4 was higher than 2023/24. With 57.1% of disadvantaged students achieving a grade 4 in English and Maths. This is compared to a national figure of 43.3% in 2023-24 (At the time of writing 2024-25 figures have not been released)
- Additionally, the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students achieving a grade 4 in English and Maths closed to 15.9 percentage points. This is a significant improvement of the national average of a 22.5% gap. This performance achieves our stated target of closing the GAP to within 20% in 2024/25.
- There does remain a significant gap in performance of disadvantaged students between English and Maths. 81% of disadvantaged students achieved a grade 4 in English compared to 57.1% in Maths. This has been reflected in adaptations to the Pupil Premium strategy for 2025-26.
- Attendance remained a significant concern for disadvantaged students, particularly with the Yr11 (84.3% in 2024-25) Various strategies were implemented to improve attendance during this time, such as increased contact with parents of those who were disadvantaged. This did see an improvement in attendance in key students compared to Yr10, with 14 out of 21 students achieving above 90% attendance. This continues to be a focus for the school with increased support from the administrative team to try to address the gap in attendance.
- One of the particular successes last year was building on the increased level of communication between the school and DA parents/ carers. This allowed us to uncover particular barriers to individual students that resulted in increased levels of attendance for those particular children.
- We did see a rise in the amount of referrals which were made through behaviour, wellbeing and mental health last year, particularly for disadvantaged students. We organised additional mentoring to take place with support from non-teaching staff and external agencies to provide our students with extra support.
- Students' access to extracurricular clubs and trips for disadvantaged students continued to grow, with financial and logistical support being offered to allow disadvantaged students to access these activities.
- Targeted intervention was provided to support students in English and Maths, which resulted in Yr11 disadvantaged pupils performing particularly strongly in English.

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
Counselling provider	Headroom, MIND trainees
Tutoring	Academy 21, Pre-Plan B, Project 25 work experience
Reading catch-up	Thinking Reading programme

Further information (optional)

We used the EEF's implementation guidance to help develop our strategy and will continue to use this through our implementation phase. We have also attended seminars with Marc Rowland in identifying key areas to focus on within our plan. We attend regular meetings within Essex to support and share strategies for our disadvantaged students.

