



Pupil premium strategy statement - Hurworth School

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 outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year.

School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	618
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	28
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3-year plans are recommended – you must still publish an updated statement each academic year)	2025-2028
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	November 2026
Statement authorised by	Rachel Somerville
Pupil premium lead	Deputy Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Martin Stand

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£205,631
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year <i>If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year</i>	£205,631



Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our intention at Hurworth School is that all pupils, regardless of background or challenges, make strong progress and achieve their full potential across the curriculum and beyond. The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to support disadvantaged pupils in overcoming the challenges they are facing within the context of Hurworth School and the wider Darlington community, ensuring that barriers are removed and opportunities for success are maximised.

We recognise that strategies which benefit our Pupil Premium cohort will also enhance provision for all pupils. Therefore, our approach is inclusive and designed to raise standards across the school, ensuring that every child thrives.

Our strategy is built on three key principles:

High-Quality Teaching First

We know that excellent teaching has the greatest impact on closing gaps. We are committed to maintaining and developing high-quality teaching across all subjects, ensuring that every pupil experiences a rich, ambitious curriculum.

Wellbeing and Basic Needs

We understand that pupils learn best when their wellbeing is supported. By addressing pastoral needs and removing practical barriers, we enable pupils to focus and perform at their best during curriculum time.

Responsive, Evidence-Based Support

Our approach is rooted in robust diagnostic assessment, not assumptions about disadvantages. We use data and professional insight to identify common challenges and individual needs, implementing strategies that complement each other and align with our whole-school priorities.

These priorities are embedded in our school values and improvement aims:

- Improving life chances and outcomes for all pupils
- Equipping every learner to be an agent of change and betterment
- Developing leadership at all levels to drive sustained improvement

Our goal is to ensure that disadvantaged pupils at Hurworth School leave us as confident, resilient learners, prepared for the next stage of education and life.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
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1	While overall pupil progress at Hurworth School is broadly in line with national averages, (for 24/25 the national A8 score for disadvantaged students was 37.6, compared to the school's A8 score of 39.5). Our disadvantaged pupils do not perform at the same level as their non-disadvantaged peers (A8 score for disadvantaged pupils 24/25 is 39.5 compared to a score of 44.5 for non-disadvantaged students). This mirrors a persistent national issue: the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils widens significantly during secondary education. National data shows that by the end of Key Stage 4, disadvantaged pupils are almost 19 months behind their peers, compared to 10 months at age 11. In 2024/25 36.1% of disadvantaged pupils achieved a grade 5 or above in English and Maths, compared to 59.6% of non-disadvantaged pupils. This gap has remained stubbornly high since the pandemic, erasing a decade of progress in narrowing inequalities (Breaking down the gap - Education Policy Institute, Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) comment: Disadvantaged... EEF). While the region has one of the largest disadvantage gaps nationally, our school has 24% of pupils eligible for Free School Meals and a gap of 7.5 months by the end of Key Stage 4, which is significantly lower than the national average of 18.3 months. These structural inequalities mean that without targeted action, disadvantaged pupils are less likely to achieve strong GCSE outcomes and progress to post-16 education. Research from the Education Endowment Foundation confirms that high-quality teaching is the most powerful lever for improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Approaches such as explicit instruction, scaffolding, and metacognitive strategies, combined with robust diagnostic assessment, are essential to closing gaps. Therefore, diminishing the difference through consistently excellent teaching and targeted academic support remains a core priority for Hurworth School (1. High-quality teaching EEF).
2	National evidence highlights that 83% of schools identify low literacy skills as a key barrier for disadvantaged pupils, alongside poor attendance (Schools identify low literacy skills and poor attendance as the... EEF). Literacy is foundational for success across the curriculum; pupils with weak reading and writing skills struggle to access subject content, engage with complex texts, and perform well in exams. Similarly, low numeracy skills limit progress in mathematics and subjects requiring quantitative reasoning. At Hurworth School, our data shows that reading ages for disadvantaged pupils are lower than those of their non-disadvantaged peers, creating additional challenges in accessing learning. While strategies implemented over the past two years have begun to show improvement, gaps remain. This is consistent with national research indicating that disadvantaged pupils are more likely to start secondary school with lower literacy and numeracy levels, which can persist without targeted intervention.



	The Education Endowment Foundation stresses that improving literacy in secondary schools is essential for raising attainment, recommending approaches such as disciplinary literacy, targeted reading interventions, and vocabulary development. Poor literacy not only affects academic achievement but also limits future opportunities, as strong literacy and numeracy skills are critical for employment and lifelong learning. At Hurworth School we believe that removing these barriers offers the best chance for our pupils to succeed academically and thrive in future life. Therefore, addressing literacy and numeracy gaps through evidence-based strategies remains a core priority in our Pupil Premium plan.
3	Our attendance data for 2024/25 shows that, while overall school attendance is broadly in line with national averages, disadvantaged pupils attend less frequently than their peers, with an average attendance of 88% compared to 92.4% for non-disadvantaged pupils. Furthermore, 21.26% of disadvantaged pupils are classified as persistently absent (missing 10% or more of sessions), which is consistent with national trends where disadvantaged pupils are almost twice as likely to be persistently absent compared to their peers. (Attendance context EEF) Persistent absence is a growing concern nationally. In 2024/25, 17.6% of pupils were persistently absent, well above pre-pandemic levels of around 10%. Among disadvantaged pupils, this figure is even higher, with some reports indicating rates of 33.6% for pupils eligible for free school meals. This pattern is mirrored in the Northeast, where absence rates remain high, contributing to the region's significant disadvantage gap. Hurworth School follows a similar pattern with 21.26% of our disadvantaged students persistently absent. (Pupil absence in schools in England, Autumn and spring term 2024/25 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK) The link between attendance and attainment is clear and well-evidenced. Research from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and others shows that poor attendance is strongly correlated with lower academic achievement and increased risk of disengagement and exclusion. The Education Policy Institute highlights that higher absence rates are a key driver of the widening disadvantage gap, with modelling suggesting that if disadvantaged pupils had the same attendance as their peers, the GCSE attainment gap could reduce by up to four months. (Pupil absence in schools in England, Autumn and spring term 2024/25 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK, Breaking down the gap - Education Policy Institute) Our observations confirm that absenteeism is negatively impacting progress for disadvantaged pupils at Hurworth School. Barriers include health-related issues, family circumstances, and reduced engagement, often linked to wider socio-economic challenges. Addressing these barriers through targeted attendance support, family engagement, and pastoral interventions is therefore a critical priority.



4	Our observations indicate that some disadvantaged pupils at Hurworth School have lower aspirations for higher education and future careers. For example, only 2 out of 18 Looked After Children (LAC) expressed confidence that university was achievable for them, reflecting a wider national trend: just 14% of care leavers progress to higher education by age 19, compared to 47% of all other pupils. (Civitas: Institute for the Study of Civil Society Breaking the Care Ceiling) This issue is compounded by regional context. The Northeast of England, including Darlington, has one of the largest disadvantage gaps nationally, with pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds more likely to become NEET and less likely to access post-16 opportunities. By the end of Key Stage 4, the disadvantage gap in the Northeast is 21.6 months, significantly above the national average. Research also shows that aspirations and academic self-concept strongly influence post-16 choices, and low expectations can limit attainment and progression. (Investigating educational disadvantage and place-based approaches in the North East of England - Education Policy Institute) A key driver of low aspirations is limited access to enrichment activities and cultural capital. Disadvantaged pupils often miss out on experiences such as trips, arts participation, and encounters with employers or universities, which are proven to boost confidence, engagement, and attainment. The Sutton Trust whilst older research (2015), highlights that students who engage in cultural and enrichment activities are significantly more likely to achieve good grades and progress to higher education. (Creating cultural capital - The Sutton Trust) Our observations confirm that pupils who lack these opportunities often struggle with engagement and motivation. Therefore, providing impactful enrichment and meaningful encounters—such as university visits, employer engagement, and cultural experiences—is crucial to raising aspirations and improving outcomes.
5	National evidence shows that 74% of schools report SEMH and wellbeing as key barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils (Schools identify low literacy skills and poor attendance as the... EEF). Disadvantaged pupils are more likely to experience stressors such as poverty, housing insecurity, and family instability, which can negatively impact behaviour, attendance, and academic engagement. These challenges are particularly acute in the North East, which has had the highest proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals for four consecutive years, indicating persistent poverty and its strong link to the widening attainment gap. At Hurworth School, this national picture is reflected in our own safeguarding data: 81% of all safeguarding incidents relate to disadvantaged pupils, highlighting the need for robust emotional and pastoral support. If pupils are not supported emotionally, they cannot fully access the curriculum, which leads to underperformance in academic assessments and reduced life chances. Compounding this challenge, Hurworth has one of the highest numbers of SEND pupils in the local authority, requiring bespoke packages of support and a fully inclusive approach to teaching. Quality First Teaching remains paramount,



	ensuring that lessons are accessible and engaging for all learners, particularly those facing multiple vulnerabilities. Research from the Education Endowment Foundation and other sources confirms that addressing SEMH needs through targeted interventions, strong pastoral systems, and inclusive classroom practice is essential for improving engagement and attainment among disadvantaged pupils.
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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
To improve rates of progress for all disadvantaged students.	- Disadvantaged pupils achieve a similar percentage in the English and Math basics measure, at least in line with national average for disadvantaged pupils - The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8 scores at Hurworth reduces year-on-year. - At least 50% of disadvantaged pupils meet or exceed their FFT5 targets in core subjects.
Increased abilities in literacy, closing the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.	- Average reading age of disadvantaged pupils compared to non-disadvantage gap closes. - Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving Grade 4+ in English Language increases by 5% year-on-year.
To improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, in line with national average statistics.	- Overall attendance for disadvantaged pupils improves to at least 90%, in line with national averages. - Persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils is reduced by at least 4% compared to previous year. - Attendance gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils reduces to less than 2%.
To improve aspirations, cultural capital and extracurricular involvement for disadvantaged pupils.	- Working towards 100% of disadvantaged pupils participate in at least one enrichment activity or extracurricular club per term. - All disadvantaged pupils have at least one meaningful encounter with higher



	education or employers annually (e.g., university visits, careers fair). • Pupil voice surveys show a 20% increase in disadvantaged pupils reporting confidence in achieving post-16 goals.
To have specific interventions and support packages available to aide pupils with vulnerabilities, including activities to engage parents.	• All pupils identified with SEMH, or safeguarding needs have an active support plan in place. • SEND and disadvantaged pupils demonstrate improved engagement scores and reduced behaviour incidents.

Activity in this academic year

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

Teaching (for example, CPD, recruitment and retention)

Budgeted cost: £100,500



Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
The Deputy Headteacher provides strategic oversight of the Pupil Premium strategy, ensuring disadvantaged pupils remain central to school improvement. Progress Tracker analysis is used following every assessment cycle to identify knowledge and skills gaps, evaluate the impact of teaching and ensure appropriate support and challenge for all pupils. Key Responsibilities and Actions: • Strategic Oversight: The leadership team monitors progress at every review point, sets and evaluates the main interventions, and ensures effective communication between school and home. • Data-Driven Focus: The Disadvantaged Lead supports with the coordination of assessment and progress data, ensuring departmental efforts target closing gaps. KS4 focus groups are identified and RAG-rated to prioritise support. • Staff Engagement: Raise the profile of disadvantaged pupils across the staff body by promoting positive discrimination in questioning, feedback, and rewards. Weekly staff briefings include reminders of key focus groups, research-based strategies, and Quality First Teaching (QFT) initiatives. • Student Voice and Personalisation: Capture pupil voice, barriers to learning, and aspirations to create pen portraits for staff, enabling personalised support. • Professional Development: Disseminate research papers and best practice strategies for staff, reinforcing evidence-based approaches to improving outcomes. • Leadership Development: SLT ensures excellent staff are retained and given leadership opportunities within their subject areas, raising teaching quality and departmental standards.	EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium • Explains the importance of strategic leadership, data-driven planning, and evidence-informed interventions for disadvantaged pupils. EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium DfE Guidance on Using Pupil Premium • Outlines expectations for leadership oversight, monitoring, and evaluation in Pupil Premium strategies. DfE Guidance for School Leaders EEF Leadership and Planning Resources • Highlights the role of leadership in implementing and sustaining effective strategies, including staff engagement and professional development. EEF Leadership and Planning EEF Evidence on High-Quality Teaching • Confirms that leadership-driven focus on Quality First Teaching is the most effective lever for improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. EEF High-Quality Teaching Guidance NFER/DfE Research on Successful Schools	1,2,3,4,5



	Shows that schools with strong leadership accountability and clear roles for Pupil Premium leads achieve better outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils – DfE/NFER	
Hurworth School recognises that Quality First Teaching (QFT) is the most effective way to close attainment gaps for disadvantaged pupils. To achieve this, we have invested significantly in staff development, ensuring our team is equipped with research-based strategies and inclusive practices. Key Actions: - Leadership Development: Whole-school CPD focuses on responsive teaching, effective use of Progress Tracker, stretching and challenge, adaptive teaching and evidence-informed approaches to improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. - Whole School CPD Programme: Our CPD focuses on coaching models, pace and challenge, and cold calling techniques to improve classroom engagement and questioning strategies. - Specialist Training for Complex Needs: As our student cohort becomes increasingly diverse, staff have received targeted training in: - Emotionally Based School Avoidance - Trauma-Informed Practice - Social Emotional Learning - Restorative Practice - Supporting Behavioural Change - Quality First Teaching for SEND and disadvantaged pupils This comprehensive approach ensures staff can meet the academic and pastoral needs of all learners, particularly those facing disadvantage.	EEF Research on CPD and QFT- EEF states that high-quality teaching is the most powerful lever for improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. 1. High-quality teaching EEF	1,2,5
Hurworth School provides enhanced transition support for disadvantaged pupils to ensure smooth progression between key stages. This includes:	EEF research: “Summer schools and transition support can improve attainment and engagement	1,3,4,5



- Year 6–7 Extended Transition: Appointment of a Transition Lead to work closely with Pupil Premium pupils who may require additional support to settle into Hurworth. Activities include extra visits, parental engagement sessions, and bespoke induction programmes. - Year 11–12 Careers Guidance: Independent careers advice is integrated into transition planning for KS5, ensuring disadvantaged pupils receive tailored guidance and multiple encounters with post-16 providers.	for disadvantaged pupils.” EEF Transition Evidence Gatsby Benchmarks: Multiple encounters with employers and providers improve post-16 progression. Gatsby Benchmarks	
Improve literacy levels through a bespoke plan which includes: - Reading lessons in KS3 curriculum - Effective use of Reading Plus Programme - Targeted Literacy Interventions - Whole School IGNITE Reading Sessions - Implement an oracy strategy - Monitor Progress and Promote Reading Culture - Targeted sessions to support parents re. low literacy levels at home - Vocabulary Challenges	EEF Toolkit: Reading comprehension strategies have very high impact (+6 months). EEF Reading Comprehension EEF Toolkit: Phonics has high impact (+5 months) for very low cost. EEF Phonics	1,2,4

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

Budgeted cost: £52,881

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Embed a strategic plan that identifies pupils most likely to benefit from small-group support. Interventions to include: - After-school revision sessions focused on closing subject-specific gaps. - Tutor-time interventions for ongoing reinforcement of key concepts.	EEF Toolkit: Small-group tuition has high impact (+4 months) for disadvantaged pupils. EEF Small Group Tuition EEF Implementation Guidance: Data-informed decision-making improves intervention effectiveness. EEF Implementation Guidance EEF Toolkit: Reading comprehension strategies (+6 months) and numeracy interventions (+3 months) show strong	1,2



Holiday masterclasses providing intensive support in core subjects. These sessions are planned to use detailed analysis of assessment data and progress reviews, ensuring that interventions are tailored to individual needs. The effectiveness of each intervention is monitored and reviewed by the leadership team as part of the school's focus on every student reaching their full potential. In addition to subject-specific support, Hurworth also delivers skills-based interventions such as reading groups and numeracy workshops, which benefit multiple subjects and strengthen foundational skills. These interventions are designed to extend beyond Year 11, supporting pupils earlier in their school journey to prevent gaps from widening.	evidence of impact. EEF Reading Comprehension	
To ensure that all students have the resources and facilities to be independent and access the curriculum. We have provided a full suite of revision guides for all Key Stage 4 disadvantaged pupils, ensuring they have equitable access to essential materials. In addition to revision guides, the school responds to individual needs by supplying practical materials and additional revision resources identified by staff or pupils. This ensures that disadvantaged pupils can fully engage with homework and revision, removing barriers that could otherwise limit progress. Hurworth School also offers 'homework' sessions and 'independent work rooms for students to access outside of the curriculum. This breaks down barriers to accessibility from home.	EEF Toolkit: Providing resources alone has limited impact unless combined with guidance and structured support. EEF Homework	1,2,4,5



Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £52,250

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
To diminish the difference between pp and non-pp the Attendance Officer dedicates time specifically to contacting parents and carers of disadvantaged pupils to encourage better attendance and engagement. Our approach is data-driven, identifying pupils and families at risk of persistent absence through regular analysis of attendance patterns. A graduated response is then implemented, starting with phone calls and escalating to home visits, meetings with parents and governors, and referrals to the local authority where necessary. This structured approach ensures early intervention and consistent follow-up. These strategies have resulted in improved attendance percentages for disadvantaged pupils and strengthened relationships between school and families, fostering a shared commitment to pupil success. However, continued efforts in these areas is required to further improve attendance.	EEF Toolkit: Parental engagement approaches can improve attainment by +4 months. EEF Parental Engagement DfE Guidance: Working together to improve school attendance recommends graduated interventions and early engagement with families. DfE Attendance Guidance	1,3,4,5
Hurworth School recognises that some disadvantaged pupils face significant social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) challenges that create barriers to learning. To address this, we provide individualised programmes of work tailored to pupils' needs, such as anger management sessions and resilience-building activities. Our team of teaching assistants and pastoral staff deliver structured interventions including ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) and Thinking Bricks, which focus on emotional regulation and problem-solving skills. In addition, we employ highly qualified external counsellors with specialisms in	EEF Toolkit: Social and emotional learning approaches have moderate impact (+4 months). EEF Social and Emotional Learning DfE Guidance: Supporting mental health in schools improves attendance and attainment. DfE Mental Health Guidance EEF evidence: Targeted SEMH interventions improve pupil engagement and readiness to learn.	3,4,5



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), early trauma, and attachment difficulties. These professionals provide therapeutic support for pupils with complex needs. To further strengthen our provision, Hurworth has invested in six trauma-informed practitioners who work directly with identified pupils. Their role is to help students feel safe, connected to the school community, and emotionally ready to access the curriculum. By removing psychological barriers to learning, these interventions aim to improve attendance, engagement, and academic outcomes.		
Hurworth School is committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have access to experiences that broaden horizons and raise aspirations. To achieve this, IGNITE weeks are scheduled into the school calendar, providing opportunities for external visitors to deliver workshops and presentations that expose pupils to a wide range of careers and higher education pathways. Each year group now benefits from whole-cohort school trips, with financial support available to remove cost barriers for disadvantaged pupils. In addition, targeted programmes such as NERAP Choices and FutureMe are delivered through collaboration between the Disadvantaged Lead, Careers Advisor, and LAC Designated Teacher. These initiatives provide structured guidance and encounters with universities and employers, ensuring disadvantaged pupils receive tailored support to raise aspirations. Departments are also expected to raise the profile of their subjects in relation to higher education, including organising visits where possible, to help pupils make clear links between classroom learning and future opportunities.	Gatsby Benchmarks: Encounters with employers and employees improve career readiness. Gatsby Benchmarks Sutton Trust research: Access to enrichment and cultural capital improves attainment and progression. Sutton Trust Cultural Capital EEF evidence: Post-16 guidance and mentoring improve progression for disadvantaged pupils. EEF Post-16 Guidance Gatsby Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers raises aspirations.	4,5
Hurworth School will strengthen parental engagement by creating opportunities for families to actively support their child's learning and develop their own skills. This will include: • Parental Engagement Events: Host workshops for parents/carers of	EEF Toolkit: Parental engagement approaches can improve attainment by +4 months. EEF Parental Engagement	2,3,5



disadvantaged pupils to share strategies for supporting homework, reading, and revision at home. These sessions will include practical demonstrations and resources. • Family Literacy Programmes: Look to offer short courses and drop-in sessions to help parents improve their own literacy skills, enabling them to better support their child's learning. This will include guidance on reading strategies, vocabulary development, and accessing online learning platforms. • Home-School Communication: Use targeted communication (calls, texts, and meetings) to encourage attendance at events and provide personalised advice for families who cannot attend in person. • Resource Provision: Provide guides and toolkits for parents on effective ways to support literacy and homework, ensuring disadvantaged families have equal access to materials.	National Literacy Trust research: Parental literacy impacts children's attainment and engagement. National Literacy Trust EEF evidence: Structured communication improves parental involvement and pupil outcomes. EEF Toolkit: Homework is most effective when parents understand how to support learning. EEF Homework	
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Total budgeted cost: £205,631



Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Hurworth School's Pupil Premium strategy is designed to remove barriers to learning and improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils through high-quality teaching, targeted interventions, and wider support. This evaluation reviews the impact of last year's actions, compares performance to national benchmarks, and identifies priorities for the coming year.

1. Attainment and Progress

Hurworth continues to perform strongly overall. For disadvantaged pupils, our Attainment 8 score was 39.5, compared to 43.1 for all pupils. This places Hurworth above the national average for disadvantaged pupils (37.6) and close to the national average for all pupils (47.4).

While this demonstrates positive impact, the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils remains significant, particularly at higher grades. For example, at grades 9–4 in English Language, 66.7% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the benchmark compared to 79.8% of non-disadvantaged peers. However, at grades 9–7, the gap widens sharply (5.6% vs 19.1%).

The attainment gap nationally widens during secondary education, with disadvantaged pupils almost 19 months behind their peers by the end of Key Stage 4. In 2025, only 26% of disadvantaged pupils achieved grade 5+ in English and Math's, compared to 55% of non-disadvantaged pupils. Hurworth's performance broadly reflects these trends, though our disadvantaged pupils outperform national averages overall.

Our focus on high-quality teaching and targeted interventions has helped narrow gaps at entry-level grades, but more work is needed to stretch and challenge disadvantaged pupils at the top end.

Our next steps will be:

- Implement strategies for high prior attainers among disadvantaged pupils.
- Increase access to academic enrichment and mentoring.
- Continue to prioritise quality first teaching across all subjects.

2. Literacy Development

Literacy remains a key barrier nationally, with 83% of schools identifying low literacy as a major challenge for disadvantaged pupils (EEF). At Hurworth, reading ages for disadvantaged pupils are lower than those of their peers, though interventions have had a positive impact.

Impact:

- Year 7 DA pupils: 77.6% are on or above expected their Reading Age compared with 89.62% of non-disadvantaged.



- Year 8 DA pupils: 72.1% are on or above expected their Reading Age compared with 91.72% of non-disadvantaged
- Year 9 DA pupils: 71.2% are on or above expected their Reading Age compared with 86.7% of non-disadvantaged

The introduction of Reading Plus, regular reading lessons, and 1:1 support has improved engagement and outcomes, but progress for disadvantaged pupils remains slower than for others.

Nationally, pupils with weak literacy skills are four times more likely to underperform at GCSE. Improving literacy is therefore critical for closing the attainment gap and improving life chances.

Our next steps will be:

- Expand disciplinary literacy strategies across all subjects.
- Increase targeted reading interventions for KS3 disadvantaged pupils.
- Monitor impact through reading age assessments.

3. Attendance

Attendance is a persistent challenge nationally and locally. At Hurworth, overall attendance is broadly in line with national averages (92%), but disadvantaged pupils averaged 88%, 4% lower than their peers.

Persistent absence nationally is 17.6%, but for disadvantaged pupils it rises to 33.6%. Hurworth's disadvantaged pupils reflect this trend, with persistent absence significantly higher than non-disadvantaged peers averaging around 20% higher.

Last year The Attendance Officer continued to work closely with pastoral and safeguarding teams, implemented rigorous tracking, and collaborated with the local authority on complex cases. Despite these efforts, attendance remains a key barrier to progress; however, based on 2025-2026 this gap appears to be closing, reducing to 15%.

Our next steps will be:

- Introduce attendance mentoring and family engagement programmes.
- Link attendance to enrichment and reward systems.
- Continue to address underlying SEMH and practical barriers.
- To work with the local authority to ensure the most appropriate support is in place for the student and family.
- Rigorous monitoring of attendance and Progress Tracker data to ensure missed learning is quickly identified. Departments will address resulting knowledge and skills gaps through responsive teaching, retrieval practice and curriculum adaptation.

4. Raising Aspirations and Cultural Capital



Hurworth has made strong progress in raising aspirations: 100% of Year 11 pupils secured their chosen post-16 destination, and NEET figures remain at 0%, compared to a national NEET rate of around 12% for disadvantaged pupils.

Students accessed a wide range of careers education through the IGNITE programme, including World of Workday, enterprise projects, and work experience. Weekly assemblies and a Post-16 Provider Event ensured disadvantaged pupils had multiple encounters with employers and providers.

However, enrichment participation remains low: disadvantaged pupils account for 12.95% of enrichment points vs 27.8% of school population. This gap limits opportunities to build cultural capital, which research shows is strongly linked to attainment and progression.

Our next steps will be:

- Reduce cost and transport barriers to enrichment.
- Target year groups with pop-up workshops and inclusive trips.
- Embed enrichment opportunities into the curriculum.

5. SEMH and Vulnerability Support

Nationally, 74% of schools cite SEMH as a key barrier (EEF). The North East has the highest proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals for four consecutive years, indicating persistent poverty and associated challenges.

At Hurworth, 81% of safeguarding actions relate to disadvantaged pupils, underlining the need for robust emotional and pastoral support. Last year:

- 30 mental health referrals (46% DA pupils).
- 380 Listening Post sessions, 52% for DA pupils.
- Practical support provided (uniform, equipment, laptops).

SEND and disadvantaged overlap remains significant, requiring bespoke packages and inclusive teaching strategies.

Our next steps:

- Family Engagement and Support
- Ensure Quality First Teaching for SEND and DA pupils.
- Increase Access to In-School Support

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you used your pupil premium to fund in the previous academic year.



Programme	Provider
Alternative provisions	• Outdoor Ambitions • Open Arms • Boxwell • Future Pathways • Key Stage Door • Daisy Chain • Darlington College • Ngage • HHTS
Staff training	• Walkthru • Trauma Informed Schools UK • PiXL Raising Standards Leader • PiXL Making Change Leader • PiXL
Department homeworks/extended learning	• Sparx • Reading Plus • Educake • Everlearner • Twinkle • Kudos • Talentino
Monitoring / tracking	• EduKey • CATS • Compass Plus
FutureMe	• Sunderland / Newcastle University
Wider support	• Peripatetic lessons (music)
In school therapy	• ABC • PWP



Further information (optional)

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