

# Pupil premium strategy statement 2025 - 2028



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	717
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	34%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2025-2028
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Nick Ward (Principal)
Pupil premium lead	Georgia Davies (Vice Principal)
Governor / Trustee lead	Lucy Gambier (Chair of Governors)

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£ 239,749.58
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years <i>(enter £0 if not applicable)</i>	£0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b> <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>	£ 239,749.58

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

Our intention is that all students, irrespective of their background or the barriers they face, make good progress and achieve high attainment across the curriculum, particularly in English and Maths. Our goal is for 100% of students to achieve grades 4+ in their English and Maths GCSEs.

The focus of our pupil premium strategy is to raise standards and outcomes for disadvantaged students so that all students progress successfully to post-16 education or training. We will consider the challenges faced by vulnerable students, such as those who have a social worker and young carers. The strategies we have outlined in this statement intend to support student needs, regardless of whether students are disadvantaged or not. It is intended that our non-disadvantaged students' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside the progress of their disadvantaged peers.

High quality teaching is at the centre of our strategy, 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.

Our strategy is also integral to wider plans for education recovery, especially for students whose education has been worst affected by the pandemic and other societal challenges. We aim to ensure that disadvantaged students have access to extra-curricular and cultural opportunities that will help them unlock their creativity and give them further life skills. Our approach will be responsive to common challenges and individual needs, rooted in robust diagnostic assessment within our context rather than assumptions. The approaches we have adopted complement each other to help students succeed. To ensure they are effective we will:

- adopt a whole school approach in which all staff take responsibility for disadvantaged students' outcomes and raise expectations of what they can achieve
- act early to intervene at the point a need is identified
- ensure that our overall school improvement priorities are intertwined with this strategy

1. *Attend well*
2. *Respond well*
3. *Read well*
4. *Learn well*
5. *Prepare for Exams well*

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Students eligible for Pupil Premium funding have lower <b>attendance</b> rates than their non-PP peers, which significantly hinders their academic progress. Missing lessons reduces access to the full curriculum, limits engagement with high-quality teaching, and directly contributes to lower attainment. Improving attendance is therefore essential to ensure these pupils can fully benefit from learning opportunities and close the achievement gap.
2	Students eligible for Pupil Premium (PP) consistently make less <b>progress</b> and achieve lower <b>outcomes</b> than their non-PP peers, as reflected in Attainment 8 scores and the proportion achieving grade 4 or 5 or above in GCSE English and Maths. This gap in achievement is a clear barrier to equity, mirroring national trends in educational disadvantage. High-quality teaching and learning is the main intervention to address this, ensuring that all pupils have access to effective classroom practice, targeted support, and evidence-informed strategies that maximize progress and help close the attainment gap.
3	Pupil Premium students are over 3x more likely than their peers to have a <b>negative behaviour</b> record, resulting in them spending significantly more time in reflection, removed from lessons or suspended. Common issues include distracting or disrupting or responding inappropriately to staff. These behavioural challenges not only limit access to the curriculum but also directly hinder academic progress. Targeted interventions to support positive behaviour are essential to ensure these pupils can fully engage in learning and close the attainment gap.
4	Approximately 60% of disadvantaged pupils have a <b>reading age</b> below their chronological age. Given that GCSE papers require a reading age of 16 for full access, this gap is directly limiting academic achievement. Low literacy not only impacts exam outcomes but also hinders engagement in lessons from Year 7 onwards. Pupils with weaker reading skills often struggle to access curriculum content, which can lead to reduced participation, lower motivation, and an increased likelihood of behavioural issues. Addressing these literacy gaps is therefore essential to improving both attainment and overall school engagement.
5	Engagement with <b>home and independent learning</b> remains a significant challenge. Both students and parents show low interaction with our online learning platforms, limiting the potential benefits for academic progress. A higher proportion of disadvantaged students miss homework deadlines and receive detentions compared to their non-Pupil Premium peers. This gap in independent learning not only hinders attainment but also reduces overall engagement with the curriculum.

## 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
<p>Achieve and sustain improved attendance for all students, particularly our disadvantaged students. This includes reducing persistent absenteeism.</p>	<p><b>Students Attend Well</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in persistent absence of all students, especially those eligible for Pupil Premium</li> <li>• Continuous improvement of attendance figures over the course of this strategy.</li> <li>• Identifying and implementing strategies to encourage students and families to engage with learning, including reintegration plans, alternative provisions, and personalised support plans.</li> <li>• Effective collaboration with Education Welfare officer</li> </ul>
<p>To ensure all disadvantaged students make good educational progress, in-line with their non-disadvantaged peers so that progress and attainment at Pool Academy is in the top 1% of schools nationally.</p>	<p><b>Students Focus, Read, Learn and Prepare Well</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-school gap in achievement between students eligible for PP and their peers to be not more than 10% in all subjects with the aspiration to achieve comparable outcomes to their peers</li> <li>• All teachers achieve 100% focus 100% of the time</li> <li>• 100% ownership from teachers, parents, students, leaders</li> <li>• Communication with parents about student progress is effective</li> <li>• Students' reading ages improve, moving closer to their chronological age</li> <li>• Progress and attainment of students eligible for Pupil Premium funding to be at least in-line with disadvantaged students nationally with the aspiration to achieve comparable progress and attainment to non-disadvantaged peers nationally</li> </ul>
<p>Improve students' ability to manage and regulate their emotions therefore improve behaviour and reduce the number of suspensions/exclusions. Ensure all students are supported through transitions between schools/education/learning providers.</p>	<p><b>Students Respond Well</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lessons are 100% disruption and distraction free</li> <li>• 100% of students respond well</li> <li>• All students have responsibility conversations when they are sent to reflection</li> <li>• Character curriculum is delivered effectively</li> <li>• Pastoral interventions are effective, including engagement with external agencies</li> <li>• Disadvantaged students receive praise points in line with their peers</li> <li>• Rates of suspension/exclusion reduce</li> </ul>
<p>Break barriers for students who do not have access to online learning outside of school and improve engagement with homework and revision activities.</p>	<p><b>Students Learn and Prepare Well</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% compulsory homework completion rate in all year groups</li> <li>• All students supported with devices or opportunities at school to complete homework if they do to have the facility/resources at home</li> </ul>

## 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: £ 115 292

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p><i>Enhancement of our KS3 Maths curriculum, creating booklets for teachers to guide teaching. Booklets in line with Athena Teaching and Learning Fundamentals as well as guidance taken from NCETM, Mosaic and Sparx curriculums.</i></p> <p><i>We will fund time for the maths team to attend necessary training and CPD in order to create effective resources.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fully supports the 5 core mastery principles set out by the NCETM:</b> An inclusive mastery approach that is intuitive to implement and supports specialists and non-specialists alike.</li> <li>• <b>Designed around Craig Barton's Learning Episode Model:</b> A responsive, step-by-step approach that is easy to implement with minimal PD, this offers a supportive and consistent teaching and learning approach.</li> <li>• <b>Aligned to the DfE non-statutory guidance:</b> Provides a clear and coherent curriculum pathway, with careful sequencing and linking of knowledge, skills, and understanding throughout KS3.</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Teaching mathematics at key stage 3</a></p>	2
<p><i>Deliver READ CPD to all staff to improve reading and literacy teaching in all subject areas. We will fund professional development and instructional coaching.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquiring disciplinary literacy is key for students as they learn new, more complex concepts in each subject: <a href="#">Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools</a></li> <li>• Reading comprehension, vocabulary and other literacy skills are heavily linked with attainment in all subjects: <a href="#">word-gap (Oxford University Press)</a></li> </ul>	2, 4
<p><i>Enhancement of our KS3 and KS4 English Curriculum.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>We will fund booklet-based</i></li> </ul>	<p>Zhao et al (2021) Active engagement through structured resources (like booklets) promotes sustained interest and active participation</p>	2,4

<i>resources for all students to use and staff to deliver lessons from.</i>	<p>in the learning process, improving overall student outcomes in language education.</p> <p>Ohta (2022) Scaffolding through structured materials, such as booklets, helps language learners develop confidence and competence by breaking down complex skills into smaller, achievable tasks.</p>	
<i>Delivery of Corrective Reading and Lexia Lessons - CPD for English teachers to deliver corrective reading lessons to KS3 learners with low reading ages</i>	<p><a href="#">Ofsted: “Now the whole school is reading”</a></p> <p>Research suggests that in schools where students had higher reading abilities and where reading strategies were effective, staff who taught reading had the expertise they needed to teach weaker readers. Schools made sure that staff who taught specific aspects of reading, or particular reading programmes, had relevant training. Those staff also supported other members of staff. They shared their expertise and delivered internal training.</p>	2,4,5

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

Budgeted cost: £ 58000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>Read Leads x 2 Targeted 1:1 or small group Support for students with low reading ages compared to chronological age</i>	<p><a href="#">EEF 1 to 1 tuition</a>: small group and one to one interventions can be a powerful tool for supporting these pupils when they are targeted at specific pupils using information gathered from assessments</p> <p>Small group reading intervention shown to boost pupil progress - <a href="#">EEF</a></p>	2,4,5
<i>Independent Learning Platforms for Homework and revision eg. Sparx and Carousel</i>	<p><a href="#">Sparx Maths</a></p> <p>Time spent using Sparx is positively and significantly associated with higher outcomes in maths</p> <p><a href="#">Carousel Learning</a></p> <p>A comprehensive online platform that harnesses the power of retrieval practice,</p>	2,5

	spacing, and interleaving – three of the most effective learning techniques backed by extensive scientific research. The EEF's <a href="#">Metacognition and Self-Regulated Learning</a> guidance report emphasizes the importance of helping students develop strategies for managing their own learning, which is a critical component of both homework and revision. Encouraging self-regulation helps students become more independent learners, improving academic outcomes.	
<p><i>Small Group tuition for year 11 students in need of additional support, delivered in support of normal lessons.</i></p> <p><i>May be internal or outsourced using Purple Ruler Tutoring.</i></p>	<p>Tuition targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining pupils or those falling behind:</p> <p><a href="#">Small group tuition   Teaching and Learning Toolkit   EEF</a></p> <p><b>Purple Ruler:</b>  Mathematics: 85.9% of students show improvement, with an average growth of 18.7% in test scores.  English: 88.3% of students showed improvement, with an average growth of 21.1% in test scores.</p>	2

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

Budgeted cost: £ 57000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>Use of an Education Welfare Officer to work collaboratively with the attendance officer and Attendance SLT lead.</i>	<p>Embedding good practice set out in DfE's guidance on <a href="#">working together to improve school attendance</a>.</p> <p>The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced persistent absence levels.</p>	1
<i>Employment of additional behaviour mentors</i>	<p>EEF - <a href="#">Targeted behaviour interventions</a> are effective in improving both behaviour and academic outcomes. These interventions are most effective when tailored to the individual needs of</p>	3

	the student and when mentors engage in regular feedback and follow-up.	
<i>Pool Academy Enrichment Programme incl. Delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh Award and Year Group Trips and visits</i>	<p>The award impacts various aspects of students' development, including leadership, confidence, teamwork, and personal growth.</p> <p><a href="#">DofE Impact Reports</a></p> <p>In a best practice review in Wales (“Effective school support for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils”), one of the practices identified was supporting disadvantaged pupils by providing access to “residential visits” and other enriching experiences. <a href="#">Estyn</a></p>	1,3
<p><i>Careers Advice and Guidance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Level 6 training for 1x staff member</i></li> <li>- <i>purchase 4x days of specialist support for student interviews and guidance with applications to post16 provision</i></li> </ul>	<p>Young people in schools and colleges with the highest-quality careers provision are 8% less likely to become NEET (not in education, employment or training). This reduction in NEET rates can reach 20% for the most disadvantaged schools. <a href="#">GOV UK</a></p> <p>Written evidence from Sutton Trust emphasises that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to have access to high-quality careers advice, and this has implications for widening access and social mobility. <a href="#">UK Parliament Co</a></p>	
<i>Uniform and Equipment - free availability to tackle the immediate barrier of preparedness and the psychological barrier of stigma.</i>	<p>Lead to better engagement, fewer feelings of stigma, and improved participation in lessons — these being important precursors to attainment. <a href="#">Believe in Me</a></p> <p>In the most disadvantaged schools, large proportions of pupils come without adequate clothing/equipment/uniform. <a href="#">NFER</a></p> <p>In a study of approaches to support “most academically able disadvantaged pupils”, one of the identified risk-factors is “financial/material barriers” which includes equipment, kit and uniforms. <a href="#">GOV.U</a></p> <p>Reports that costs associated with school attendance (transport, uniform, etc) are major barriers for disadvantaged pupils. <a href="#">National Governance Association</a></p>	

	Low-income students show better attendance when uniform is present. <a href="#">ScienceDirect</a>	
<i>Contingency fund for acute issues.</i>	Based on our experiences and those of similar schools to ours, we have identified a need to set a small amount of funding aside to respond quickly to needs that have not yet been identified.	All

**Total budgeted cost: £ 239,749.58**

## Part B: Review of the previous academic year

### Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

*We have analysed the performance of our school's disadvantaged pupils during the previous academic year, 2025, drawing on national assessment data and our own internal assessments.*

The 2025 GCSE outcomes clearly identify a substantial attainment gap that necessitates the focused, high-impact interventions outlined in the new strategy.

36% of the students in year 11 were eligible for the Pupil Premium which is almost 10% above national average. There was a 22% difference in the 5 GCSEs at 5+ including English and Maths measure and a 10 point difference in Attainment 8. The 5+ GCSEs gap is similar to the national average and the attainment 8 gap is less than the national average gap.

Positively, our more able disadvantaged students outperformed their non-disadvantaged peers in the 7+ in English and Maths measure with over 10% of disadvantaged students gaining this.

Based on all the information above, the academic performance of our disadvantaged pupils did not meet our expectations, and we will work with our new three year strategic plan alongside our Prepare Strategic plan to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged students over the course of the plan.

We have also drawn on school data and observations to assess wider issues impacting disadvantaged pupils' performance, including attendance, behaviour and wellbeing.

We have seen a huge improvement in the attendance of all students, especially those who are disadvantaged. Last year PP attendance was 87.9% and impressively the persistent absence rate for pupil premium students was 10% below the national average rate!

56% of the total suspensions given last year were to students eligible for Pupil Premium which is a reduction from 71% the previous year. Overall the number of PP student suspensions reduced by 326 on the previous year, and this is while the overall students population and proportion of PP students grew.

All students reading below their chronological age were on a catch up program during the year. There was an 8% increase in the number of students at or above their chronological age by the end of the year and a 12% reduction in the amount of students more than 12 months away from their chronological age.

The dedicated investment in literacy directly targeted low reading ages through READ CPD, Corrective Reading lessons, and 1:1/small group interventions. This coherent, multi-faceted approach breaks down the fundamental barrier that poor literacy poses to accessing GCSE content, which is a key contributor to the large attainment gap. The enhancement of the KS3 Maths curriculum is also a key measure to rebuild foundational knowledge. The impact of this will be measured over the course of this three year plan and beyond.

Our evaluation of the approaches delivered last academic year indicates that the most effective actions we took were 1. attendance interventions, including rewards and collaboration with the EWO, 2. CPD for tutor time reading, embedding a strategy to make reading a whole school priority and involve all members of staff and subject disciplines, 3. collaboration with support services to support safeguarding and wellbeing concerns.

The new 2025-2028 strategy is appropriately ambitious and evidence-led, focusing resources on the high-impact areas required to significantly close the gaps in attainment.