

# Pupil premium strategy statement

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 effect that last year's spending of pupil premium had within our school.

## School overview

Detail	Data
School name	Duke's Secondary School
Number of pupils in school (years 7-11)	936
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	52%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers ( <b>3 year plans are recommended</b> )	2022/23 – 2025/26
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	Ruston Atkinson, Principal
Pupil premium lead	Andrew Blight, Assistant Principal
Governor / Trustee lead	Martin Preston

## Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£597,631
Recovery premium funding allocation this academic year	£0
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
<b>Total budget for this academic year</b> If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	£597,631

# Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

## Statement of intent

*Our ambition is for every child to maximise their potential regardless of background; for all learners to be seen and treated as individuals with their individual learning needs met daily to ensure that all succeed.*

*Our Pupil Premium Strategy supports this approach by looking at the educational, emotional, behavioural and technological needs of our disadvantaged students and arranging support provision in such a way that it allows them to achieve the best academic outcomes and be fully prepared for the next stages of their journey in education or employment.*

*The provision of quality first teaching is at the forefront of our approach, with a clear aim of challenging and supporting students and developing the independent learning skills that will make our students effective lifelong learners. Quality first teaching is proven to have the biggest positive impact on the attainment gap between disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers and a focus on our school's teaching DNA and DRGOPTA (Dialogue, Resources, Groupings, Outcomes, Pace, Task, Assessment) approaches as the basis for improvements in teaching and learning is a central aspect of this statement document.*

*Our statement is also clear on our intention to support educational progress with high quality intervention, including the continued use of intervention in English and Maths as well as the provision of on-line tutoring for some of our students who are finding it difficult to access a full time curriculum. Intervention is secondary to the intention of providing quality first teaching, but is still important in ensuring that any student who is struggling to make the progress expected of them is supported to close any gaps. The focus for this intervention is on Y11 in the first instance but will support disadvantaged students in other year groups, too.*

*We believe that developing staff awareness through quality CPD of the issues faced by disadvantaged students and of effective strategies that can be used to support them is an important aspect of any pupil premium strategy in order to ensure that staff take responsibility for their role in the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and are equipped with the knowledge and strategies that will help them to narrow the attainment gap.*

*A number of our students both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged face significant pastoral, behavioural and emotional issues which affect them both in school and out. Along with the national picture, this is a situation that has been exacerbated by the recent disruptions to education and isolation caused by the covid lockdowns. Our belief is that strong emotional, behavioural and pastoral support is required to ensure that all of our students, but particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are able to receive the support they require to ensure that they are able to make the best academic progress within the school environment.*

*Despite setting out our overall aims within this document, we regard a pupil premium strategy as something that is constantly evolving as we respond to challenges and new opportunities come to light. The school operates a robust data process for all year groups and the performance of all approaches and the impact on outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils will be monitored to establish the effectiveness of the strategies in place and to highlight any additional needs in order to allow the refinement and development of the overall strategy.*

## Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Attainment, particularly in EBACC subjects, of pupil premium students is below that of their non-pupil premium peers. As an example, the Attainment 8 score for non disadvantaged students in 2025 was 3.75 compared to 2.64 for disadvantaged students.
2	Assessments show that many disadvantaged students enter Y7 with lower than expected reading ages which impacts their ability to effectively access the Ks3 and later Ks4 curriculum.
3	A significant proportion of our students, particularly those in Year 7, 8 & 9, have experienced significant pastoral, behavioural and welfare issues as a legacy of the disruption to education caused by the Covid-19 school closures. In line with national studies, this appears to have had a proportionately greater negative impact on disadvantaged students.
4	In-school observations suggest that many of our disadvantaged students lack independent learning strategies which provides a progressively greater negative impact in their ability to achieve academic success as they progress through the Ks3 and Ks4 curriculums when compared to their peers.
5	Our attendance data over the last 3 years indicates that attendance among disadvantaged pupils is consistently lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils. In 2025 the gap between non-disadvantaged and disadvantaged students attendance was 5.7%.
6	Our internal research has shown that a number of our disadvantaged students have limited access to technology which impacts on their ability to follow the school curriculum at Ks3, Ks4 and Ks5, particularly in the event of Covid-19 closures, isolation or illness and also limits their development of independent learning skills.
7	As a result of the current cost of living crisis, a significant number of our families are currently experiencing fuel and / or food poverty. In line with national figures, this is having a proportionately greater negative impact on disadvantaged families.
8	Not all staff are fully aware of the complexities faced by PP students and how to support them through quality first teaching to reach the standards of their non-disadvantaged peers.
9	A number of our students are difficult to engage through the usual school curriculum, particularly since the Covid pandemic, which negatively impacts on their attendance, attainment and progress as they progress through their school journey.

## 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
Improved attainment among disadvantaged students in English and maths at the end of Ks4	<p>Outcomes over the next three years continue to reduce the gap in performance between PP and non-PP students using outcomes from 2019 as a baseline and include an overall 2025-26 target for disadvantaged pupils to achieve:</p> <p>35.9% 4+ in English and maths</p> <p>17.4% 5+ in English and maths</p>
Improved reading comprehension among disadvantaged pupils across Ks3	<p>The use of NGRT demonstrates an improvement in the reading ages of disadvantaged pupils and a smaller disparity between the scores of disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers. There is significant improvement in the proportion of disadvantaged students reaching age expected reading levels from baseline testing in September</p>
Improved confidence in the use of independent learning strategies among disadvantaged students leading to the development of key skills and increased exam readiness	<p>Improvements in school progress data and assessment and examination outcomes provide evidence of improved use of independent learning strategies among disadvantaged pupils. Students show more resilience in preparing for and sitting internal and external examinations.</p> <p>Outcomes at KS4 exhibit a reduction of the gap in performance between PP and non-PP students using outcomes from 2019 as a baseline and 2023-24 as comparison.</p>
Improved wellbeing for all pupils but with particular reference to disadvantaged pupils	<p>School provision provides clear support pathways in place for students with emotional, behavioural and pastoral needs that link closely to external support agencies.</p> <p>Student voice responses show that all students, but particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds feel that their wider needs are met.</p>
Improve and sustain attendance figures for all students but with particular reference to disadvantaged students	<p>Gradual improvement in overall attendance and disadvantaged pupil attendance outcomes.</p>
To improve access to technology for all students but with particular reference to disadvantaged students	<p>Through our ICT strategy, all students have access to a Chromebook and / or to the internet at school and at home in a system that is heavily discounted for disadvantaged students. There is full access to on-line and remote school learning for all pupils.</p>

Support families who may be suffering from food and / or fuel poverty	Parents' Evening events are community events, designed to support the whole family with food, clothing and other products available for some of our less advantaged families.
Develop staff effectiveness in planning for the needs of disadvantaged students	Raising standards by providing high quality support for teachers' awareness of PP students and how to effectively plan for their needs.
To improve student engagement through the development of the school enrichment and extra-curricular offer	Gradual improvement in PP attendance and well-being. Additional opportunities offered through CCF, DofE and NUFC foundation workshops.
To develop the use of positive reward systems to improve pupils' learning behaviours.	Reward systems every half-term through the inauguration of the 'PROUD' programme. Motivation associated with rewards can influence the rate at which pupils learn and this has had a positive impact across key stages.

## Activity in this academic year

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

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

Budgeted cost: £223,989

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>Develop the use of the school's DNA strategy through use of the Reflective Teacher App in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning for all students. School CPD will continue to focus strongly on developing this approach and the DRGOPTA differentiation strategy.</i>	Research highlights the fact that quality first teaching that responds to the needs of all students is more likely than any intervention to close the attainment gap. <a href="https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/1-high-quality-teaching-eeef">1. High-quality teaching   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a>	4
<i>The core subjects of English, maths and science are overstaffed to allow for smaller sizes for some teaching groups, closer individual support for students and more targeted deployment of staff.</i>	EEF research suggests that the reduction of class sizes can have a positive impact on the progress of students if it allows the use of targeted teaching strategies or smaller group intervention. <a href="https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/reducing-class-size-eeef">Reducing class size   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a>	1
<i>Purchase of NGRT and CAT4 tests for year 7 to provide specific and immediate information about the strengths and weaknesses of individual students and support literacy and wider academic intervention.</i>	Development of reading comprehension has a positive impact on students' ability to access the whole curriculum. Disadvantaged students in particular are likely to transfer to secondary school with lower levels of reading comprehension. <a href="https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/improving-literacy-in-secondary-schools-eeef">Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a>	1,2
<i>Purchase of the National College and</i>	Using the Pupil Premium to improve teaching quality benefits all students and has	1,3,4,5

<i>We Are in Beta on-line platforms to allow specific Teaching and Learning and PP focused CPD for staff</i>	a particularly positive effect on children eligible for the Pupil Premium. <a href="#">Pupil Premium Guidance.pdf (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a>	
<i>Development of PP focused staff CPD opportunities during Wednesday CPD sessions and INSET</i>	The Educational Endowment Foundation research shows that supporting high quality teaching is pivotal in improving children's outcomes and that high quality teaching can narrow the disadvantage gap. <a href="#">Effective Professional Development   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a>	8,1

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

Budgeted cost: £274,856

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>Funding of Intervention Tutors for both English and Maths to help support the improvement of subject knowledge and understanding for key identified students. This provision will be focussed on Y11 initially but will also support Y10 and Ks3 students over the course of the year. The provision will be for all students, based on individual need, but with a significant proportion of support going to disadvantaged students.</i>	EEF research suggests that 1:1 tuition has a high impact for moderate cost while small group tuition intervention has a moderate impact for low cost. <a href="#">One to one tuition   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a>  <a href="#">Small group tuition   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a>	1, 4
<i>Creation and continued provision of The Beacon, Lighthouse and ARC within school to offer an alternative pathway for students who find it</i>	Research suggests that provision tailored to the needs of small groups of students can have beneficial effects. Mentoring, behaviour support, TA support and personalised curriculums are designed to support student progress.	1,2,3,4,5



<p>difficult to access the main school curriculum. The provision will cover behavioural, social, emotional and academic intervention including Early Help support. It will support any student requiring intervention but will help a significant proportion of disadvantaged students of all year groups</p>	<p><a href="https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/teaching-and-learning-toolkit">Teaching and Learning Toolkit   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/improving-behaviour-in-schools">Improving Behaviour in Schools   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p>	
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## Wider strategies (for example, related to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Budgeted cost: £98,786

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p><i>Creation of a structured programme of enrichment opportunities (extra-curricular) will engage students at school. This is a whole school strategy but will support engagement in the wider curriculum for disadvantaged students</i></p>	<p>Children who participate in regular extra curricular activities gain confidence, develop social skills and other soft skills and are more likely to go on to further or higher education. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are 3 times less likely to take part in regular extra curricular activities. Regular extra curricular opportunities in school will help engage students and develop their wider education.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/extra-curricular-activities-soft-skills-and-social-mobility">Extra-curricular activities, soft skills and social mobility - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p>	5
<p><i>Provision of a school Education Welfare Officer to support students with attendance difficulties and to promote regular attendance.</i></p>	<p>Improvements in attendance figures for all students, but particularly PP students, continue to be a whole school priority. Government guidance suggests that schools should 'Recognise attendance as an important area of school improvement (and) make sure it is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of pupil premium funding) to create, build and maintain systems and performance.'</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-school-attendance-support-for-schools-and-local-authorities">Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p>	5



<i>Students in all year groups have all been supplied with Chromebooks in order to support learning through access to technology and to develop independent learning skills. The scheme for years 7-9 was through the Learning Foundation scheme and was heavily discounted for Pupil Premium students</i>	<p>Evidence suggests that the existence of the digital divide further accentuates the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students. The school is working to reduce this gap by ensuring that all students have access to quality technology on which to base learning. EEF research suggests that using digital technology to develop assessment, feedback, quizzing and retrieval practices can be particularly effective for disadvantaged students.</p> <p><a href="#">Home - Digital Poverty Alliance</a>  <a href="#">Using Digital Technology to Improve Learning   EEF</a>  <a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk"> (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p>	6,4,5
<i>Employment of a school counsellor to work with students impacted by issues in and out of school. This is a whole school provision but will impact significantly on the wellbeing of disadvantaged students</i>	<p>Good mental and emotional wellbeing is an integral part of children and young people's holistic development. There has been an increased number of students with emotional difficulties in the aftermath of the Covid pandemic who would benefit from the provision of a counsellor in school.</p> <p><a href="#">Counselling in Schools – A Blueprint – Gov.UK</a></p>	3,5,1
<i>Holding half termly 'Winter Warmer' support sessions for families in need. These sessions have an open invitation to all families but are particularly targeted towards disadvantaged students and their families</i>	<p>We are holding these sessions with the simple aim to support our wider school community which has been considerably impacted by the cost of living crisis. However as an additional aim, we also hope that the holding of these events will establish stronger relationships between school and parents of some of our disadvantaged students. EEF guidance suggests that positive relationships with parents can increase parental engagement with the education of their child and lead to learning gains of 3+ months over the course of the year</p> <p><a href="#">Working with Parents to Support Children's Learning   EEF</a>  <a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk"> (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a></p>	7
<i>Development of a diverse programme of enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities for Duke's students</i>	<p>Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to be able to benefit from clubs and other activities outside of school due to the associated financial costs. By providing activities free of charge, schools give pupils access to benefits and opportunities that might not otherwise be available to them.</p>	9

	<a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/physical-activity">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/physical-activity</a>	
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**Total budgeted cost: £597,631**

## 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 pupils in the 2022 to 2024 academic year.

Year 11 outcomes in 2022-23 showed that, as a result of the school teaching and learning strategies and the support and intervention put in place there was a significant increase in attainment, when compared to 2019. However, results from 2024-25 did not follow a similar trend of improvement for both Pupil Premium and non-Pupil premium. The gap between the performance of Pupil Premium students when compared to the performance of their non-pupil premium peers also remained high in 2025, and the reduction of this gap continues to be a school priority.

In the classroom, the embedding of the T&L DNA and DRGOPTA differentiation technique has continued to be a focus in the teaching of all subjects and at all key stages, and is now allowing our students to begin to develop the independent learning strategies that will support them to improve their individual and cohort outcomes. Internal evidence shows that for academic year 2024/25 the DNA is fully embedded in planning and teaching and learning but the DRGOPTA strategy is not yet fully implemented and remains a school development priority. Staff CPD has been specifically based on the use of the school DNA and DRGOPTA over the course of the year. Our last full Ofsted inspection which took place in June 2023 highlighted the improvements in the embedding of these strategies and the impact it was making on the quality of the teaching and learning in lessons. We have also embedded the Reflective Teacher app which enables us to monitor the quality and use of the DNA and DRGOPTA in lessons.

Our focus on improving reading and literacy continues to be a school priority and our use of the New Group Reading Test programme continues to support our disadvantaged students to improve their reading skills. In 2024-25 a significant number of our students who accessed this support were able to improve their reading efficiency and consequently, their overall access to the wider curriculum.

Tutors have been deployed to work with small GCSE target groups in English and Maths. Tutors have personalised the teaching to suit the needs of students within the group. Group tutoring has facilitated communication and collaborative work for pupil premium students and has enabled students to get additional guidance and support from their tutor on specific topics.

Although in line with the national picture, attendance at Duke's is lower than it was at pre-pandemic levels, the positive outcomes from the school's attendance strategy were

recognised by Ofsted when the school was inspected in June 2023. The attendance strategy has a clear focus for supporting our PP students to attend school more regularly and there has been a gradual improvement in the attendance of these students. Duke's are building positive connections between parents and teachers and this is improving academic achievement, social competencies and emotional well-being.

From September 2023, all students in Duke's have access to their own chromebook. This is 2 years ahead of the expected timeline. Google Classroom is now fully embedded into our day to day teaching and learning practice. Staff and students have responded positively to practical examples of how Edtech can enhance teaching and learning as part of our blended approach through bespoke CPD. This provision also supports our students to catch up with any work missed due to absences and provides a range of material to support learning and exam revision. The chromebook scheme continues to be heavily discounted for the families of PP students.

From 2022, Duke's have hosted 'winter warmer' events that engage with the local community and which also support those families who may be struggling due to the current cost of living crisis. The Duke's staff committee has organised an event each term over the course of the last academic year and each one of these has provided warm food, clothing and toiletries for any family that requires them. We will be hosting further events in 2025/26 to build on the connections made.

The COVID pandemic has left schools with a legacy of educational, social and emotional difficulties and in this, our school is no exception with a large proportion of our students facing considerable gaps in their skills and knowledge as well as significant behavioural, social and emotional needs. In order to support students in overcoming these issues, Pupil Premium funding continues to be used by the school to run a number of strategies such as:

- A literacy strategy that incorporates the use of New Group Reading Tests to identify need and co-ordinate support so that a significant percentage of those students who were identified as being below expected levels when tested have improved to be closer to expected levels by the end of the year
- The Beacon student support area to support those students for who access to the mainstream curriculum is a challenge but remains an aim
- The employment of a school counsellor to provide additional support for the welfare needs of students
- The continued refinement of the school *Ready, Respectful and Responsible* ethos and behaviour approach to ensure that expectations are clear and understandable for all students, but particularly disadvantaged students
- The embedding of EdTech practices across the school allowing the further development of independent learning strategies, retrieval practices, feedback and low stakes assessment to support disadvantaged students to become examination ready

- A new attendance strategy which has seen attendance levels for the overall cohort and PP students gradually improve.
- A 'new' transition project for Y6 students. This is a vital intervention that prevents a long-term dip in academic attainment and protects student mental health. This has focused on:

- 1) Preventing the 'academic dip'
- 2) Shift in Pedagogy
- 3) Institutional and social adjustment
- 4) Support for vulnerable learners

The school continued to develop its aspirational and careers programme through the development of the Gatsby benchmarks for quality careers based provision. Aspirational and careers based activities were able to go ahead as planned for all year groups for the first time in two years and disadvantaged students were all given the opportunity to experience both a workplace and university experience over the course of the year along with other experiences.

## 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
National College subscription	The National College
We Are In Beta Website	We Are In Beta
Reflective Teacher	Beezapps
New Group Reading Tests	GL Assessments
CAT4 Tests	GL Assessments
Tassomai	Tassomai
ALPS	ALPS

## Service pupil premium funding (optional)

*For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information:*

Measure	Details
How did you spend your service pupil premium allocation last academic year?	<p>We organise extra curricular trips for our students to provide support and develop friendships.</p> <p>Two members of staff have a remit of supporting service pupils throughout their time at school and particularly when a family member is deployed.</p>
What was the impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils?	Our service students were given the opportunity to meet other service students, develop friendships and receive support when required.

**Further information (optional)**