

Pupil Premium Strategy Statement 2025-27 – Whickham 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	1391
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	22.2%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers	2025-27
Date this statement was published	Dec 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	Dec 2026
Statement authorised by	F Turnbull
Pupil premium lead	S Tumelty
Governor / Trustee lead	M Lambert

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£318,200
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0.00
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>	£318,200

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Our aim is to support all pupils to be the best that they can be. We centre this around developing four qualities in our pupils; aspiration, respect, resilience and empathy.

We believe every learner can excel and are committed to offering a rich, challenging curriculum that enables all pupils to thrive. Through our pupil premium strategy, we aim to ensure disadvantaged pupils are supported to attend, achieve, and grow into confident, capable citizens who are ready to lead successful and fulfilling lives.

Strong attendance to school is vital to a pupil's academic success, wellbeing and wider development. We focus on ensuring pupils have high levels of attendance through effective processes which both support and challenge. We value relationships with parents and carers and implement strategies to improve parental engagement.

High quality teaching and learning are at the heart of our strategy, ensuring that all pupils have access to lessons and resources that enable them to make sustained progress. We aim to give disadvantaged pupils the same opportunities as non-disadvantaged pupils and our target setting encourages disadvantaged pupils to make stronger progress than their peers.

Each faculty ensures that disadvantaged pupils are their first priority when planning, delivering and assessing learning. We treat pupils as individuals and ensure that we address the needs of pupils on this basis.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	<p>Attendance</p> <p>At Whickham School persistent absence remains a significant barrier to success for our disadvantaged pupils. Following the pandemic, absence rates have increased, disproportionately affecting pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium.</p> <p>As a school our attendance target remains at 98%. At the end of the 2024-25 academic year Pupil Premium attendance stood at 86%, 6.7%</p>

	<p>below their non-pupil premium peers at 92.73%. This highlights the need for targeted interventions to improve engagement and attendance for this group of pupils.</p> <p>There is a further gap to those pupils who are categorised as DS and SEND, this subgroup is a key focus for this academic year.</p> <p>A further DS area of focus is females. There is a clear gap between DS female and male attendance, strategies need to create a sense of belonging and remove any barriers specific to this cohort.</p>
2	<p>Wellbeing & Mental Health</p> <p>Evidence based research highlights that wellbeing issues nationally are most prevalent with our disadvantaged pupils, 19% of all DS pupils at Whickham are receiving some form of wellbeing support. Challenges at Whickham include: symptoms of poor mental health, all of which can significantly impact children's ability to engage in learning and achieve their potential.</p> <p>Through early recognition of individual needs and high-quality interventions, strong pastoral care, and specialist support, we ensure DS pupils excel both in their learning and personal development.</p>
3	<p>Attainment & Progress</p> <p>Both at Whickham and nationally there is a clear gap in both attainment and progress between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students. Whilst the attainment of DS pupils at Whickham is higher than that of disadvantaged pupils nationally it is still below that of non-disadvantaged pupils at both Whickham and nationally. Reducing this gap is an ongoing priority.</p>
4	<p>Lower literacy, oracy and restricted vocabulary</p> <p>Academic research highlights pupils who fall behind in reading at an early age often have lower GCSE outcomes than pupils who are brought up in a 'book rich' household.</p> <p>From analysis and assessment year 7 DS pupils have a reading age gap of 5 months on entry to Whickham, this increases as they move through the school. Based on data a number of the most disadvantaged pupils have lower literacy and oracy skills, as compared to other pupils as well as restricted levels of vocabulary. This is a whole school focus within our school improvement plan.</p>
5	<p>Behaviour for learning</p> <p>Evidence highlights that a number of pupil premium learners demonstrate higher levels of behavioural concerns as well as suspensions and/or exclusions.</p>

	Through developing strong behaviours for learning we can address issues with behaviour and put in place interventions through pastoral support plans to develop good behaviours and learning habits.
6	<p>Engagement - Pupils & Parents</p> <p>In recent years parental engagement with school life has declined. This has contributed to a shift in attitudes towards the importance of attendance and qualifications further impacting progress and attainment for disadvantaged students.</p> <p>In school tracking in the academic year 24-25 identified a gap with pupil premium learners having lower levels of engagement in extra-curricular clubs, trips and visits. We are committed to improving participation and broadening pupil experiences and cultural capital.</p>
7	<p>Level of Aspiration</p> <p>From research our most disadvantaged students often come from families with no history of further or higher education.</p> <p>To raise pupil aspirations a comprehensive programme is in place to build self-belief and ensure pupil premium learners are well-prepared for further education, employment, or training.</p>

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
1. Improve the attendance and punctuality of DS pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance tracking processes highlight patterns and trends, these are challenged leading to a reduction in the attendance gap between DS and non-DS pupils. Attendance data is monitored daily to ensure the earliest intervention takes place with DS pupils being supported/ challenged first. - Implementation of strategies to ensure DS attendance achieves a minimum level of 91.5% for the academic year 25/26. - Weekly and termly data show a consistent downward trend in DS pupil lateness. Overall DS lateness is not above 4%. - Weekly QA highlights regular and proactive communication with parents/carers of DS pupils is established, leading to a measurable increase in parental involvement and improved attendance rates for DS pupils.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All DS pupils have access to the necessary resources, including learning materials, extracurricular opportunities, and wellbeing support.
2. Improve the progress of DS pupils through quality first teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality assurance will show no discernible difference between the quality of work produced by DS and non DS pupils. - Ensure disadvantaged pupils' average progress score continues to be higher than the national average for similar groups and reduce the in-school gap to to remain below national. - Remove the gap in reading ages between DS and non-DS pupils. Currently the gap in Y7 sits at over 5 calendar months and widens as pupils move through the schools.
3. Improve parental/ carer engagement and increase buy-in to common aims of building aspiration, strong attendance, good behaviour and engagement in learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction in the attendance gap between DS and non-DS pupils, with PP attendance sitting at 91.5% for the academic year 25/26. - Reduction in the number of fixed term exclusions within the DS cohort below 10%. - By the end of this academic year, at least 65% of parents/carers of disadvantaged pupils (DS) will attend parents' evenings.
4. Improve engagement with home learning and revision including homework & tuition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure all pupils identified as persistent non-completers of homework will attend the Homework Hub or Year 11 Catch-Up Room until improvement is evidenced. - Ensure strong attendance of DS pupils to one to one or small group tuition. The target for attendance of DS pupils is 90%. - Ensure attendance of DS cohort to revision sessions to be a minimum of 70%. - All DS pupils have the necessary equipment and hardware to engage with homework and home learning. All DS pupils have access to a laptop and internet access. - All students identified as needing additional support are able to access targeted tuition, with at least 90% of students attending tuition sessions regularly (2024/25) and showing measurable improvements in their academic performance. This is something as a school we need to improve to reach our set target. - The progress of our DS cohort to be above the national average.
5. Reduce the lost learning time of DS pupils due to behavioural incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This academic year, Class Charts behaviour data will show that the average number of behaviour incidents per disadvantaged pupil (DS) is in line with or lower than that of non-DS peers. - QA shows all teachers fully implement the live learning strategy to reduce lost learning due to behavioural incidents.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DS pupils make at least expected progress in all subjects with gaps in attainment between DS and non-DS pupils reduced to below national average.
6. Improve the emotional well-being of DS pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure all pupils, including DS pupils, experiencing wellbeing issues are supported through referral to the Mental Health Team. - Support appropriate DS families by engaging a FSW to work directly with families using a TAP approach. - DS pupil voice demonstrates that pupils are equipped with the skills and knowledge to cope with stress and promote their own wellbeing. - DS pupils demonstrate improved resilience and coping strategies when facing academic or personal challenges, as evidenced by self-report measures or feedback from staff and parents, through the ClassCharts tool.
7. All DS pupils to be fully prepared with the necessary tools and equipment to engage with school learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All DS pupils are provided with an equipment pack that includes a scientific calculator. - All DS pupils have access to a laptop and internet, this is actioned via the Achievement Team. - Ensure all DS pupils are fully equipped for school life beyond the curriculum allowing them to partake in extra-curricular opportunities and trips/visits. - All Y10 and Y11 DS pupils are provided with revision guides and resources to support them in their studies at the start of their GCSE programmes.
8. Support DS pupils to take part in extracurricular activities that broaden their cultural capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 60% of DS pupils will attend one or more extracurricular activities each term, aligning with participation rates of non-DS peers. - All DS pupils have access to high quality 1 to 1 CEIAG exploring options of further education/ higher education, training and employment. - Increased numbers of DS pupils who progress to sixth form to above 35%.

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: £146,372

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Whole school staff CPDL related to improving attendance and the quality of teaching and learning, including reading and oracy strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued development of resources to support students in closing the 'word gap' (targeted approaches to vocabulary instruction). - Continued development of curriculum plans to support increased formal opportunities to 'read for learning' as well as 'read for pleasure'. - Modelling and development of reading fluency, emphasising the importance of prosody. - Creating opportunities in the curriculum for structured talk 	<p>Quality first teaching is widely recognised in many publications as the biggest driver of improvement for DS pupils.</p> <p>EEF toolkit on metacognition, reading comprehension, feedback mastery learning and collaborative approaches are the most impactful strategies. These are all teacher led.</p> <p>See Sec Ed paper link.</p> <p>EEF Research Paper - Improving reading in Secondary Schools</p>	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
Achievement team interventions to support home learning & homework	<p>Quality home learning supports pupils' understanding of key knowledge and concepts. Internal data and national press indicates that DS pupils engage less well with home learning.</p> <p>Homework extends the curriculum for pupils. Supporting DS pupils to engage with homework could have up to +5 months impact link</p>	2, 3, 4, 6
Improve literacy levels of DS pupils through tutor time interventions, accelerated reader and whole school approach to the explicit teaching of reading.	Various papers including, improving literacy in secondary schools EEF link .	3, 4

	Accelerated Reader can support 3 months' additional progress for FSM pupils. EEF project summary. Link	
Deliver a strong programme to support DS pupils with study skills and habits	These programmes teach pupils to self-regulate, helping them to become more independent learners; see metacognition and self-regulation in EEF toolkit. link	5, 6
Supply DS pupils with revision guides and equipment.	Part of the strategy of removing barriers to learning and treating DS pupils as individuals. Supporting the attainment of pupil premium pupils briefing paper. Link Sec Ed summary Link	3, 6, 7

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

Budgeted cost: £101,824

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
School led one to one tutoring	EEF toolkit link	3, 4
School led small group tuition	EEF toolkit link	3, 4
Partial funding of achievement officers responsible for the academic mentoring and support of DS pupils	Strong evidence on EEF website see toolkit link	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Tutor time interventions small group support	Peer tutoring and small group tuition has a strong evidence base EEF toolkit link	3, 4, 6
School holiday academic support & revision sessions	EEF toolkit link	3, 4, 6

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

Budgeted cost: £70,004

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Additional funding of attendance officer to support DS attendance	Link to DFE paper on impact of poor attendance on attainment. The Key summary link .	1

Additional funding of a family liaison officer to nurture relationships with parents and improve attendance.	See Parental engagement strand of EEF toolkit. The impact of Parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievements C Deforges 2003 Link	1, 2, 6
Additional funding of Behavioural support workers	The negative impact of poor behaviour on attendance, progress and engagement is well documented. The EEF paper on behaviour highlights the need to teach good behaviours. The use of non teaching staff to support our restorative approach to learning supports our most vulnerable pupils.	5, 6
Transport support to enable attendance at after school activities	Link to DFE paper on impact of poor attendance on attainment. The Key summary link .	6

Total budgeted cost: £318,200

In many instances pupil premium money funds a proportion of the activities. Where the activity would not happen without the pupil premium funding then the whole cost is allocated from the funding stream. These activities are constantly revised and the proportion of the funding allocated changes according to need and impact. Even though we are required to state what we allocate the Pupil Premium funding on, we do not limit the resources that we allocate to improving the attainment and progress of disadvantaged students.