

Willingdon Community School 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 outcomes for disadvantaged pupils last academic year.

School overview

Detail	Data
Number of pupils in school	1121
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	22% - 247 pupils
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)	2025/2026 to 2028/2029
Date this statement was published	March 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2026
Statement authorised by	Emily May – Headteacher
Pupil premium lead	Tom Cain – Assistant Headteacher
Governor / Trustee lead	Chair – Jane Branson PP Lead – Alison Flynn

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil Premium funding allocation this academic year	£216,075
Service Children funding allocation this academic year	£2,450
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>	£218,525

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

The school's intention is to ensure that all pupils, regardless of background or challenge, make strong progress and achieve high attainment, particularly in EBacc subjects.

The pupil premium strategy focuses on enabling disadvantaged pupils, including high attainers, to succeed, while also supporting vulnerable pupils such as young carers and those with social workers.

High-quality teaching is central to closing attainment gaps and benefiting all pupils. This strategy aligns with wider education research and is underpinned by early intervention, robust assessment, high expectations, and a whole-school commitment to improving outcomes for disadvantaged learners.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1 – Increasing Attendance to School	Our attendance data last year indicated that attendance among disadvantaged pupils was 4.4% lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils. 34% of disadvantaged pupils were persistently absent during the last academic year. This is negatively impacting disadvantaged pupils' progress.
2 – Closing Attainment Gap for Disadvantaged Students	Our outcome data last year indicated that the Attainment 8 score among disadvantaged pupils was -20.14 lower compared to non-disadvantaged pupils. The Attainment 8 score for disadvantaged pupils was 28.52, with 36% getting a 4+ in both English and Maths and 19% getting a 5+ in both English and Maths.
3 – Improve Pupil Behaviour	Our behaviour data last year indicated that 50% of all suspensions were issued to disadvantaged pupils. Being suspended from school causes pupils to miss lessons and therefore has a negative impact on disadvantaged pupils' progress.
4 – Improving Reading Levels	Disadvantaged pupils generally have lower levels of reading comprehension than their peers. We are aware of this through teacher assessments, lesson observations and discussion with KS3 pupils. This directly impacts their progress in all subjects.
5 – Greater Access to Extra-Curricular Activities	Disadvantaged pupils are less likely to take part in enrichment/extra-curricular activities. We want to ensure that all disadvantaged pupils access at least 1 extra-curricular activity across an academic year.

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 attendance for disadvantaged pupils	<p>Sustained levels of higher attendance to school among disadvantaged pupils and a smaller disparity between the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the attendance gap to less than 4% by the end of 2025/2026 academic year <p>Reduce the number of persistent absentees to below 30% by the end of 2025/2026 academic year</p>
Improved attainment for disadvantaged pupils	<p>Sustained levels of higher outcomes among disadvantaged pupils and a smaller disparity between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the attainment gap to less than -15.00 by the end of 2025/2026 academic year <p>Increase the average attainment score of disadvantaged pupils to above 30.00 and above 40% for disadvantaged pupils achieving 4+ in both English and Maths and above 20% achieving 5+ in both by the end of 2025/2026 academic year</p>
Improved behaviour (serious incidents) for disadvantaged pupils	<p>Sustained levels of reduced serious incidents (suspensions) among disadvantaged pupils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of disadvantaged pupils being issued with a suspension, to below 37 students by the end of 2025/2026 academic year <p>Reduce the percentage of suspensions involving disadvantaged pupils to less than 50% by the end of 2025/2026 academic year</p>
Improved reading comprehension among disadvantaged pupils across KS3	<p>Reading comprehension tests demonstrate improved comprehension skills among disadvantaged pupils and a smaller disparity between the scores of disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers.</p> <p>Teachers should also have recognised this improvement through engagement in lessons and book scrutiny.</p>
Improved attendance and access to enrichment clubs and extra-curricular activities	<p>Give priority access and opportunities to disadvantaged students in attending enrichment clubs and extra-curricular activities including trips. Barriers to trips (including financial) are reduced through funding offers for disadvantaged pupils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track and monitor the attendance of disadvantaged pupils to enrichment clubs and extra-curricular activities including trips.

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: £ 50,261

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Continuing with the subscription to Sparx Reader for KS3 students, as well a WRAT 5 testing for students who have been identified with low reading comprehension	<p>Correctly diagnosing pupils allows staff to fully appreciate student needs. This then allows teachers to adapt student learning to meet those needs.</p> <p>Better targeted intervention can be offered to address those pupils most at need: https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/guidance-for-teachers/pupil-premium/Pupil-Premium-2023.pdf?v=1696434151</p>	2, 4
Developing metacognitive and self-regulation skills. CPD opportunities given to staff, initially through SEND department	<p>Teaching metacognitive strategies to pupils can be an inexpensive method to help pupils become more independent learners.</p> <p>There is evidence that suggests that if explicitly taught it can close the disadvantage gap: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/meta-cognition-and-self-regulation/</p>	2
Maintain the Maths department teaching and learning curriculum. This is predominantly smaller class sizes in KS4 than KS3 for more targeted and specific Maths support.	<p>To teach maths well, teachers need to assess pupils' prior knowledge and understanding effectively, employ manipulatives and representations, teach problem solving strategies, and help pupils to develop more complex mental models: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/maths-ks-2-3?utm_source=/education-evidence/guidance-reports/maths-ks-2-3&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=site_search&search_term=mathe</p>	2
Improving literacy in all subject areas in line with recommendations from the EEF.	<p>Acquiring disciplinary literacy is key for students as they learn new, more complex concepts in each subject: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks3-ks4</p>	2, 4

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

Budgeted cost: £ 54,631

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Adopting a targeted reciprocal teaching programme as a reading intervention for disadvantaged pupils who need additional help to comprehend texts and address vocabulary gaps.</p>	<p>Reading comprehension strategies can have a positive impact on pupils' ability to understand a text, and this is particularly the case when interventions are delivered over a shorter timespan:</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/reading-comprehension-strategies/</p>	<p>2, 4</p>
<p>Maintain the decision to move away from a fully set / streamed approach to our groupings. Instead moving to a more flexible grouping system. As part of a quality first teaching approach teachers and leaders will have support and guidance on how best to adapt groupings flexibility in order to meet the needs of students as they progress.</p>	<p>Following diagnostic testing, summative and formative assessments, teachers and subject leaders will be able to manipulate groups in order to meet the changing needs of students. They can then offer more target intervention in the lesson to students as they need it.</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/eef-blog-flexible-grouping-what-is-it-and-why-use-it?utm_source=/news/eef-blog-flexible-grouping-what-is-it-and-why-use-it&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=site_search&search_term=flexable</p> <p>Lessons targeted at specific needs and knowledge gaps can be an effective method to support low attaining pupils or those falling behind, both one-to-one:</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition</p>	<p>1, 2, 3</p>
<p>Targeted PP students to be given the opportunity for a vocational pathway with an approved qualification in KS4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MVM • The Workplace • Plumpton College • Achieve Programme (ESCG) • Multi Skills Course (ESCG) 	<p>Use of alternate provision with vocational focus to improve attainment for our most vulnerable PP/DA students who are at risk of being NEETS post 16:</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748910/Investigative_research_into_alternative_provision.pdf</p>	<p>1, 2, 3</p>
<p>Learning mentors to support targeted intervention/students in KS4 to encourage higher aspirations for PP students. Support in enrichment opportunities and support with post 16 options.</p>	<p>Supporting PP students to attend interventions and feel supported in core lessons. Supporting students with their post 16 aspirations and applications to avoid them becoming NEET.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3</p>

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

Budgeted cost: £113,633

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
Mindfulness sessions during RSHE. All Year 7s to complete the Mindfulness SOW delivered by the teachers of mindfulness	EIF's report on adolescent mental health found good evidence that mindfulness interventions support young people's social and emotional skills and can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression: https://www.eif.org.uk/report/adolescent-mental-health-a-systematic-review-on-the-effectiveness-of-school-based-interventions	1, 3
Track and monitoring of attendance by all with support from EWO targeting PP students	The DfE guidance has been informed by engagement with schools that have significantly reduced persistent absence levels: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance	1, 2, 5
Use of Pastoral Support Leaders to target PP students and their families to increase engagement with school for attendance and behaviour expectations.	DfE's advice sets out the need for early support to prevent PA and this Pastoral Support Leaders are well placed to support with this	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Student welfare, counselling and group work to support students in KS4 with poor mental health.	BACP research suggests that school based counselling and mental health support provides significant reduction in psychological distress compared to those only receiving pastoral support: https://www.bacp.co.uk/news/news-from-bacp/2021/21-january-effectiveness-of-school-counselling-revealed-in-new-research/	1, 2, 3
Free breakfast for all to ensure that all PP students have access to toast/healthy snack and drinks in the morning from 8am. 20% of the funding comes from the PP budget.	EEF research into magic breakfast suggests that it isn't just eating breakfast that raises attainment but being part of a breakfast club. Our breakfast offer is supported by learning mentors to improve the social and educational benefits of a morning check in with students: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/magic-breakfast	1, 3
Transition to ensure that PP students and their families are supported in their transition from main feeder primaries. 50% of	UCL researched the STARS project (school transition and adjustment to secondary school) and found the use of a known adult, such as a transition TA to be one of the most effective strategies in	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

transition TA funding to come from pupil premium.	reducing anxiety to transition and loss of attainment: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pals/research/clinical-educational-and-health-psychology/research-groups/school-transition-and-adjustment	
Music lessons for PP students to ensure these are provided by the music service to enable talents to thrive.	Sutton Trust research demonstrates measurable impact for PP students taking part in peripatetic music lessons: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/413197/The_Pupil_Premium_-_How_schools_are_spending_the_funding.pdf	1, 2, 3, 5
Contingency fund for acute issues.	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	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Total budgeted cost: £ 218,525

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Attendance

Generally, PP attendance is reducing year by year. There are many aspects to this, including the increased numbers of PP students entering the school each academic year. We are also noticing a larger number of students taking time off of school for unauthorised families holidays, often due to the affordability for families when travelling in term time:

2024/2025 Academic Year: 87.8%

2023/2024 Academic Year: 89.6%

2022/2023 Academic Year: 90.7%

2021/2022 Academic Year: 91.4%

Lots of attendance challenges and incentives remain in place, for all students and including PP students, to regularly encourage good attendance to school.

(Allocation of funding: £16,943)

Alternative Provisions

100% of PP students enrolled onto alternative provisions are able to access them and achieve at least a Level 2 Qualification as a result. These provision range from Motor Vehicle Maintenance (St Catherines), The Workplace, Bexhill and more recently an array of course at Plumpton College.

Student voice from those attending these courses and provisions is incredibly positive and suggests that whilst they enjoy attending, they also see the value in the practical courses that they regularly wish to go into for a career.

(Allocation of funding: £15,060)

Mental Health First Aid/Support

100% of PP students are able to access pastoral support via PSLs, as well as personalised counselling if/when it is needed. The counselling is accessed via a referral from the students' pastoral team and is readily on hand.

During Key Stage 4, students have access to Learning Mentors. Mentors target students to support with academic studies in lessons and personal issues outside of

lessons. Learning Mentors are regularly on hand to discuss exam stresses/worries, Post 16 applications and Work Experience, amongst other things.

During Key Stage 3, all students have full access to a 7 week course of Mindfulness lessons. This is embedded into their curriculum time with trained Mindfulness leads delivering the content of the lessons for the students.

All students also have access to the early morning breakfast in the Canteen, free of charge. This academic year, the options available through this service have grown, largely down to student voice.

(Allocation of funding: £41,415)

Access to Quality Teaching & Learning

Until the Class of 2025, the trend was positive and showing minor reductions in the PP Gap compared to non-PP students in relation to Attainment 8 scores:

Class of 2025: -20.14

Class of 2024: -8.00

Class of 2023: -9.45

Further investigation is needed into the results of the Class of 2025 to establish if this is a contextual issue and to assess to actions currently being taken for PP students.

(Allocation of funding: £114,834)

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
Motor Vehicle Maintenance	St Catherines College
14-16 Courses, including land management and small animal care	Plumpton College
The Workplace	SABDEN Multi Academy Trust

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

For schools that receive this funding, you may wish to provide the following information: **How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year**

We run a weekly Nurture Forest School. Students take part in this on a scheduled basis every Wednesday. This opportunity take place off-site, is a full day of nurture, team work and SEMH development.

The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils

The Boxhall Profiles of students that took part in the Forest School programme demonstrated a positive impact on the Forest School and follow up nurture provision.