

Pupil premium strategy statement – Downlands Community School

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery premium for the 2023 to 2024 academic year) 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	Downlands Community School
Number of pupils in school	1250
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	11%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2023-2026
Date this statement was published	December 2025
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2026
Statement authorised by	Mr M Ashdown
Pupil premium lead	Mr C Runeckles
Governor / Trustee lead	Mrs E Field

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£96,750
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (enter £0 if not applicable)	£0
Total budget for this academic year If your school is an academy in a trust that pools this funding, state the amount available to your school this academic year	N/A

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Statement of intent

Objectives

To narrow the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils so that attainment for disadvantaged pupils at our school exceeds that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally;

- To adopt a whole-school approach to best serve our disadvantaged cohort. This means ensuring a shared responsibility among all staff that drives a collective effort to improve outcomes for our most disadvantaged pupils;*
- To promote the highest expectations of our disadvantaged pupils amongst the whole school community and to challenge assumptions around socio-economic disadvantage, so that irrespective of background, all pupils are given the opportunity to experience success across all areas of our curriculum;*
- To provide the powerful knowledge and transformative opportunities that take disadvantaged pupils beyond their lived experience*

Strategies to achieve objectives

- Through a culture of assessment not assumption, ensure all staff know disadvantaged pupils as individuals and understand the specific challenges to learning they may have.*
- Ensure the highest possible quality pastoral care for disadvantaged learners based on a sincere regard for their wellbeing and progress.*
- A coherent school-wide approach to literacy, in particular reading and vocabulary instruction;*
- Build a sense of belonging and connection to our school community for our disadvantaged pupils and families, to reduce negative behaviours and improve attendance;*
- Support our disadvantaged pupils to experience personal growth through our ROCKS character education*

What are the key principles of your strategy plan?

- A broad and balanced curriculum, accessible to all, through consistent high-quality teaching.*
- Equity of provision and experience*
- Building community and belonging*
- Personal growth through character education*

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	Literacy and numeracy Data, observations and discussions show our pupil premium pupils start at Downlands with significant gaps in their literacy and numeracy knowledge, which is likely to prevent them for accessing some parts of our curriculum.
2	Behaviour Our behaviour data highlights that pupil premium pupils are more likely to be sanctioned for negative behaviour and less likely to be rewarded for positive behaviour. There are wider issues underpinning this data regarding curriculum equity and access, support in catching up and keeping up, and a lack of belonging for pupil premium pupils.
3	Attendance Our attendance data highlights a significant concern regarding both persistent absenteeism and lower attendance percentages for pupil premium pupils. As with behaviour, there are wider issues underpinning this data regarding curriculum equity and access, support with catching up and keeping up, and a lack of belonging for premium pupils.

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. Improved overall attainment and progress for pupil premium pupils.	Pupils eligible for pupil premium achieve an overall Attainment 8 score higher than non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, and narrow the attainment gap to non-disadvantaged pupils at Downlands. Where this is not happening, departments are putting in place interventions, monitored by heads of departments and senior team
2. Higher levels of progress in literacy & numeracy for pupils eligible for pupil premium.	Pupils eligible for pupil premium improve reading scores through developing vocabulary, decoding, reading comprehension and spoken comprehension. These students also develop numeracy skills through a maths mastery curriculum that develops their conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. This will be evidenced using English/maths assessments, termly progress reports and reading scores.
3. Proportionately fewer negative behavioural issues	Fewer negative behaviour incidents and a greater number of positive behaviour incidents recorded for pupil premium pupils on the school system.
4. Increased attendance rates for pupils eligible for pupil premium.	Improve overall attendance for pupil premium students to above 94% and reduce

	the number of persistent absentees (PA) to 15% or below.
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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: £ 2,750

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>To focus work at all levels to focus on in class strategies to boost pupil premium attainment and progress.</i>	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/implementation https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/effective-professional-development https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/cognitive-science-approaches-in-the-classroom https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/literacy-ks3-ks4 Every department has a curriculum improvement plan to improve classroom practice based on the EEF implementation plan model. All of these plans have a focus on inclusion with a particular emphasis adaptive teaching, with each department choosing one of the following areas of focus categorised under 4 main headings: • Explicit instruction (one from): ○ Chunking ○ Dual coding ○ Guided practice ○ Scaffolding • Vocabulary instruction • Knowledge (one from): ○ Checking for understanding ○ Retrieval practice ○ Interleaving • Reading strategies	1,2,4

	CPD calendar has been designed to prioritise work in departments on the chosen CIP priority. This includes modelling and rehearsal of teacher techniques.	
<i>National College Online course</i>	CPD to support creation of EEF Implementation Plans	1

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

Budgeted cost: £ 57,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<i>Learning mentors to work 1:1 with targeted pupil premium pupils.</i>	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/one-to-one-tuition 1:1 Intervention rated as highly effective (+5 months) by EEF T&L Toolkit. This is an expanded provision. Students are referred by HOY, typically sessions of 1 hr once a fortnight for 6 weeks.	1
<i>Withdrawal of small groups making less than expected progress in English & Maths in Yr 7 & 8</i>	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition Working in small groups, enables the teacher to focus exclusively on a small number of learners who in this case have lower literacy/numeracy attainment. This has a focus on phonics. Groups are determined by HOF & reviewed throughout the year	1,2
<i>Reading initiative</i>	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/phonics EEF Toolkit –phonics-based interventions have a high impact (+5 months). While this is targeted at primary aged children, we have a small cohort of children that are still struggling with decoding and are exploring phonics interventions to support them in being able to	1,2

	access the curriculum. This is at an early stage and will begin later in the academic year.	
<i>Weekly small group sessions in maths, English & science with HOD or equivalent, replacing tutor time or assembly.</i>	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition Working in small groups, enables the teacher to focus exclusively on a small number of learners who in this case have lower literacy/numeracy attainment.	1,2
<i>Progress meetings to assign targeted interventions</i>	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/leadership-and-planning/supporting-attendance/deliver-targeted-interventions-to-supplement-universal-provision Internal data is collated and analysed to identify underperforming pupil premium pupils. These pupils are allocated appropriately targeted interventions making use of the SEND, pastoral and Hub intervention teams. Progress meetings are weighted towards interventions for PP (+5 initiative). These happen 5 times over KS4, involve all stakeholders and are led by HOY	1
<i>PP Pupil Passports</i>	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/individualised-instruction https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/behaviour This are one-page documents highlighting the most useful strategies to meet individual pupils' specific needs through high quality adaptive teaching. They also include strategies to support positive behaviour.	1,3

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

Budgeted cost: £37,000

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
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<i>Action Your Potential</i>	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/mentoring https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/metacognition External provider that facilitates 1:1 mentoring and coaching to support pupil premium pupils with organisation, self-regulation, well-being and engagement. This also involves parent participation and is an 8-month program with bi-weekly interventions.	3,4
<i>Deployment of learning mentors, pastoral team & SEMH specialist</i>	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning Deliver SEL interventions. Restorative practice reduces patterns of repeated behaviour. Small group work with learning mentors, pastoral team and SEMH specialist in the Hub minimises work lost resulting from fixed term exclusions. Learning mentors assess pupils' attitudes against national benchmarks using PASS online surveys. Internal data shows, there is a trend of fewer repeated challenging behaviours.	3,4
<i>Career guidance sessions.</i>	Evidence supports that pupils with clear goals tend to perform better. Focussed career advice provides direction and support. Pupil premium students have priority to meet 1-2-1 with our careers adviser.	4
<i>Family support worker employed to monitor and intervene on pupil premium attendance. Pastoral Support Officers (PSO) also have attendance as core part of job role.</i>	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/leadership-and-planning/supporting-attendance https://www.onecornwall.co.uk/site/data/publications/attendance-booklet/index.html Evidence shows a strong correlation between attendance and academic outcomes. Family support worker employed to specifically focus on pupil premium attendance and developing supportive relationships with pupils and families to improve attendance. PSOs also support SEL interventions to assist pupils with their emotional self-regulation to support a positive relationship with school.	3,4
<i>Character initiatives create greater sense of belonging, building cultural capital & self-efficacy.</i>	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/social-and-emotional-learning https://www.onecornwall.co.uk/site/data/publications/attendance-booklet/index.html	4

	Middle leader position created for character leadership, with a team of 5 further staff within individual areas of responsibility beyond this.	
<i>Character Passport</i>	Each year group has a core trip designed to deliver cultural capital which makes up a “character passport”. Where necessary, the full cost of participation in these trips is covered for pupil premium pupils.	4
<i>Yr 7 Attendance checklists – EBSA approaches to facilitate early identification of barriers to attendance</i>	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/securing-good-attendance-and-tackling-persistent-absence Our school data shows that pupils with 80% attendance or lower on average underachieve by 2 grades in all subjects. EBSA support officer to work closely with family support worker and PSOs to identify & tackle barriers to attendance, paying particular attention to year 7 students so as to facilitate & develop early intervention strategies.	4
<i>Breakfast Club</i>	https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/breakfast_interventions_-_rapid_evidence_assessment.pdf?v=1764272855 Aim is to improve student engagement, wellbeing and to build relationships as well as reduce hunger in school. This will support attendance, concentration in & engagement with learning & provide a space for SEL. Run by family support worker.	3,4
<i>Team around the child (TAC) meetings</i>	These are in-house meetings that mirror a professionals meeting. Used to evaluate current strategies and interventions for individual pupils and to establish consistent good practice. TAC meetings to prioritise pupil premium pupils. TAC meetings will employ academic and pastoral interventions for individual pupils as required. They will focus on the logistics of delivering this strategy. Led by HOY	1,3,4

Total budgeted cost: £ 96,750

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 2023 academic year.

Achievement

There were 17 PP pupils in the Yr11 cohort 2024-25. A8 for all was 57.2, A8 for PP was 45.7. This was significantly above the national average for PP pupils and a significant improvement on the previous two years.

Attendance

Last academic year PP attendance was 83.6%, compared to 92.7% for other students.

Behaviour

PP students accounted for proportionally more behaviour events than non-PP students. PP students were also significantly more likely to receive a suspension.

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
1:1 mentoring	Action your potential
Blended Learning	APC