

Pupil premium strategy statement – Open Academy

This statement details our school's use of pupil premium (and recovery 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	532
Proportion (%) of pupil premium eligible pupils	38%
Academic year/years that our current pupil premium strategy plan covers (3 year plans are recommended)	2025/26 – 2027/28
Date this statement was published	June 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	December 2027
Statement authorised by	Mr D Bagshaw
Pupil premium lead	Mr I Fisher
Governor / Trustee lead	Mr B Gordon

Funding overview

Detail	Amount
Pupil premium funding allocation this academic year	£214,463
Pupil premium funding carried forward from previous years (<i>enter £0 if not applicable</i>)	£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>	£214,463

Part A: Pupil premium strategy plan

Our commitment to every student

At Open Academy, we believe that every pupil — regardless of their background or personal circumstances — deserves an excellent education and every opportunity to succeed.

Pupil Premium funding allows us to remove barriers that some of our student's face, whether those barriers are related to their learning, wellbeing, attendance, or access to opportunities outside the classroom.

Our strategy is built on four clear principles:

- High-quality teaching in every classroom is our first and greatest tool for closing the attainment gap.
- We act early — identifying and supporting needs as soon as they emerge.
- Every member of staff shares responsibility for the progress and wellbeing of our disadvantaged pupils.

We make sure every student's basic pastoral needs are met so that they can engage fully in their learning.

Challenges

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

Challenge number	Detail of challenge
1	A significant proportion of our disadvantaged Year 11 pupils are predicted to achieve Grade 5 or above in English — currently around 25%. This is lower than their non-disadvantaged peers.
2	Disadvantaged pupils typically arrive in Year 7 with reading ages around 8 months behind their peers. 69% arrive below age-related expectations (compared to 59% of others). This reading gap affects progress in all subjects.
3	Many lower-attaining disadvantaged pupils find it difficult to check, evaluate, and improve their own work independently — particularly in literacy tasks. This limits their ability to make progress without adult support.
4	Several of our disadvantaged pupils experience anxiety, low self-esteem, or diagnosed mental health conditions. These challenges affect attendance, concentration, and the ability to engage with learning.

5	Over the past five years, attendance among disadvantaged pupils has been 3–6% lower than their peers. Between 11–13% of disadvantaged pupils have been persistently absent, compared to 5–6% of their non-disadvantaged peers.
6	Parent/pupil voice, observations, PASS survey results and feedback from careers meetings have identified lower aspirations for many of our disadvantaged pupils. These challenges affect levels of motivation and subsequently behaviour.

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
Improve the attendance of our disadvantaged pupils, particularly those classified as persistently absent.	The attendance of disadvantaged pupils meets or exceeds the national average for all pupils. There will be a narrowing and then eventually eradication of the attendance gap between our disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils. There will also be a reduction in the disproportionate representation of disadvantaged pupils as persistent absentees.
Improve GCSE attainment among disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum.	The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils is well above national averages The gap between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average.
Improve the literacy and reading ages of our disadvantaged pupils in years 7-9. Every pupil in school has a reading age that is within two years of their chronological age.	Ensure that disadvantaged pupils who enter the school with below average reading and literacy standardised scores receive intensive intervention and support to raise their levels. Using GL and internal assessments in English will show improved progress over time.
Increase disadvantaged pupils' cultural capital and opportunities for enrichment.	All disadvantaged pupils will have increased access to enrichment opportunities. Tracking of attendance at club and educational visits will show that disadvantaged pupils will have engaged with increased enrichment opportunities.
Improve and sustain the wellbeing of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.	Student voice surveys, parent feedback, Thrive assessments and teacher observations demonstrate improved wellbeing. All disadvantaged pupils have access to an emotionally available adult.
Raise aspirations and subsequently behaviour and motivation of our disadvantaged pupils.	All disadvantaged pupils will receive early intervention to help raise their motivation and aspirations for their post-16 education and careers. This will result in fewer behaviour incidents recorded from disadvantaged pupils and an eradication of any disadvantaged pupils who are not in education post16.
Improve and sustain attendance for disadvantaged pupils.	Overall absence rate below 4%. The attendance gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils reduces by 3%. Persistent absence among

	disadvantaged pupils falls to no more than 4% above their peers.
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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: £112,179

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Ongoing staff training and professional development (NPQs and CPD). We fund specialist professional development for our staff — including National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) — so that every teacher is equipped with the best strategies for supporting disadvantaged pupils. Training is ongoing and built into the school timetable.</p>	<p>The EEF’s guidance on Pupil Premium states that the quality of teaching is the single most important in-school factor affecting pupil outcomes. Sustained professional development, including NPQs, improves pedagogical knowledge and instructional quality. The EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit (2021) estimates that improving teacher effectiveness has the potential to add more than a year’s worth of additional progress for disadvantaged pupils. Research by Cordingley et al. (2015) found that sustained, collaborative CPD leads to measurable improvements in pupil outcomes, particularly for lower-attaining groups.</p>	<p>1,2,3,6</p>
<p>Teaching Expectations Embed a set of teaching and learning principles/habits for pupils and staff to ensure greater consistency in teaching strategies.</p>	<p>Consistency in teaching practice is a key driver of pupil progress. The Sutton Trust-EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit highlights that effective pedagogical routines, including clear learning intentions and structured practice, have a moderate-to-high impact on attainment. Rosenshine’s Principles of Instruction (2012) provide a research-backed framework for embedding high-expectation teaching habits, emphasising regular review, questioning, and guided practice. The EEF’s “Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants” guidance (2021) also notes that consistent whole-school teaching expectations reduce</p>	<p>1,2,3,6</p>

	variability in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.	
<p>Using Go4schools and analysing Data Effectively. Embed the use of more diagnostic standardised assessments (GL) to act as baselines, identify pupil strengths and weaknesses, inform intervention and teaching and learning. Ensure that the subsequent intervention targets the most suitable pupils and the impact of the intervention is evidenced.</p>	<p>The EEF guidance “Using Digital Technology to Improve Learning” (2019) highlights that data-informed teaching enables teachers to identify gaps and target interventions more effectively. Black and Wiliam’s seminal research “Inside the Black Box” (1998) demonstrates that formative assessment and diagnostic feedback are among the most powerful tools for raising pupil achievement. Standardised GL assessments provide reliable baseline data; the EEF notes that accurate identification of need is a prerequisite for effective intervention, and that poorly targeted support is one of the main reasons interventions fail to close the disadvantage gap.</p>	1

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

Budgeted cost: £31,370

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Seating plans and class information for all staff Every teacher uses an annotated seating plan identifying which pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium. This means your child's teacher knows who they are and can make sure they receive extra attention, support and check-ins during lessons.</p>	<p>The EEF “Pupil Premium Guidance” (2021) recommends that schools use data systematically to identify disadvantaged pupils and ensure staff know who they are teaching. Hattie’s synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses (Visible Learning, 2009) identifies teacher-student relationships and targeted teacher attention as having significant positive effects on learning outcomes. Annotated seating plans are a practical mechanism for ensuring every teacher is aware of pupil need, enabling more equitable distribution of teacher attention and reducing the risk of disadvantaged pupils becoming “invisible” in large classrooms.</p>	<p>1,3,4,6</p>
<p>Adaptive teaching and live feedback in lessons Teachers are trained to check for understanding in real time — for example, by using mini-whiteboards or targeting specific questions at PP pupils. Your child's work will be checked first so that any gaps are spotted and addressed quickly. PP pupils are also prioritised during the 'practice' phase of lessons.</p>	<p>The EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit rates feedback as one of the highest-impact strategies available, with an average of +8 months of additional progress. Black and William (1998) demonstrated that formative assessment strategies — including checking for understanding and targeted questioning — significantly raise attainment, especially for lower-achieving pupils. Rosenshine’s Principles of Instruction (2012) highlight the importance of frequent, low-stakes checks for understanding and ensuring high success rates during guided and independent practice, directly supporting the adaptive teaching approaches described here.</p>	<p>1,3,4,6</p>

<p>Homework and Progress Folders All pupils use Progress Folders to track their work and act on teacher feedback. Homework is set through proven online platforms and is designed to be meaningful and achievable. We support pupils who may struggle to access homework at home.</p>	<p>Homework has a positive impact. Disadvantaged pupils may not all have access to technology or a quiet space in which to complete homework, so it is important that schools offer homework support. EEF Homework</p>	<p>1, 2, 3 and 5</p>
<p>Retrieval practice at the start of every lesson All subjects begin lessons with a short 'retrieval starter' — a set of questions that help students recall previous learning. Research shows this significantly improves long-term memory and understanding</p>	<p>Roediger and Karpicke (2006) demonstrated through experimental research that retrieval practice significantly enhances long-term retention compared to re-reading or passive review — an effect known as the “testing effect.” Dunlosky et al. (2013) rated practice testing as one of the highest-utility learning strategies in their review of ten commonly used techniques. The EEF’s guidance on metacognition and self-regulated learning (2018) also supports structured retrieval practice, noting it helps pupils consolidate knowledge and build long-term memory, with particular benefit for disadvantaged learners who may have less opportunity to rehearse knowledge at home.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3 and 5</p>
<p>Bespoke reading interventions PP pupils with a reading age below their chronological age receive targeted reading support. We use Bedrock Reader to accelerate reading progress, and pupils are rewarded for the progress they make.</p>	<p>The EEF’s Literacy Guidance report (2017) identifies reading comprehension strategies and interventions targeting below-age-level readers as having a high impact on attainment (average +5 months). Research by the National Literacy Trust highlights that children who read for pleasure make greater progress in literacy than those who do not. Targeted reading interventions for disadvantaged pupils with below-average reading ages have been shown to be especially effective when delivered consistently with fidelity. EEF also notes</p>	<p>2</p>

<p>Reading enrichment activities — including library clubs and literacy-focused trips — are also offered</p>	<p>that rewarding reading engagement and providing access to books increases motivation and reading frequency, which compounds over time to close the literacy gap.</p>	
<p>Access to resources, equipment and uniform No pupil should be unable to learn because they lack the basic tools. We provide equipment (pens, pencils, rulers, calculators), uniform, and shoes to PP pupils who need them through a hardship fund.</p>	<p>Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1943) establishes that basic physiological and safety needs must be met before higher-order cognitive engagement is possible. The EEF’s guidance on narrowing the attainment gap emphasises removing non-academic barriers to learning as a prerequisite for any academic intervention to be effective. Research by the Child Poverty Action Group highlights that pupils in poverty frequently attend school without essential equipment or adequate uniform, which affects both their ability to participate in lessons and their sense of belonging and self-esteem. Addressing these material barriers directly improves readiness to learn.</p>	<p>5,6</p>
<p>Revision support and study resources for Year 10 and 11 All PP pupils in Year 10 and above receive a revision folder. Breakfast sessions, careers interviews and college/sixth-form visits are also offered, with free lunch provided as an incentive for early attendance. We make sure no PP pupil misses out on post-16 opportunities.</p>	<p>The EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit rates metacognition and self-regulated learning (including structured revision strategies) as having a very high impact on pupil attainment (+7 months). Research by Higgins et al. (EEF, 2016) highlights that disadvantaged pupils benefit significantly from explicit teaching of revision strategies, as they are less likely to have access to coaching and support at home. Evidence from the Social Mobility Commission (2020) shows that aspiration-raising activities — including careers guidance and post-16 visits — have a measurable positive effect on the progression rates of disadvantaged young people.</p>	<p>1,6</p>

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

Budgeted cost:£67,802

Activity	Evidence that supports this approach	Challenge number(s) addressed
<p>Attendance Improvement Team We employ a dedicated Attendance Improvement Team who monitors every pupil's attendance and prioritises PP pupils for home visits, follow-up phone calls, attendance support plans and punctuality reports.</p>	<p>Research published by the DFE indicates the higher a pupil's level of absence, the lower their attainment. DFE Absence and attainment DFE guidance highlights the importance of supportive relationships and early intervention. DFE Working together to improve school attendance</p>	1,5
<p>Trips and visits — financial support PP pupils receive financial support to attend school trips and visits. We actively monitor trip attendance to make sure disadvantaged pupils are as well represented as any other group. Trips broaden pupils' cultural experiences and raise their aspirations.</p>	<p>The EEF's guidance on "Wider Strategies" for disadvantaged pupils highlights that cultural capital — the breadth of experiences and knowledge pupils bring to their learning — is a significant predictor of attainment. Research by the Sutton Trust (2017) found that disadvantaged pupils are significantly less likely to participate in enrichment activities outside school, widening the experience gap. Ofsted's research into the curriculum (2019) identifies cultural capital as essential to a broad and balanced education. Ensuring PP pupils have equal access to trips and visits directly addresses this deficit and supports raised aspirations and motivation.</p>	5,6

<p>After-school Electives Programme We run a broad programme of after-school activities every day (from 3.10pm), including Art, Basketball, Multi-Sports, Debating and more. KS4 pupils also have access to subject-specific intervention sessions (Hubs) and homework support groups. All PP pupils are encouraged to attend.</p>	<p>The EEF’s evidence on after-school programmes indicates they can have a moderate positive impact on academic outcomes, particularly when they combine structured academic support with enrichment activities. Research by the Sutton Trust (2014) found that extracurricular activities improve pupils’ social skills, self-regulation, and sense of belonging — all of which are linked to improved attendance and academic engagement. The DfE’s own guidance on pupil premium recommends after-school homework clubs as a targeted support for disadvantaged pupils who may lack a quiet space or adult support at home.</p>	<p>1, 2 and 5</p>
<p>Form attendance breakfast We offer breakfast sessions for pupils and forms with excellent attendance records. This provides both a practical incentive and a welcoming, positive start to the school day.</p>	<p>Evidence indicates that providing a healthy school breakfast at the start of the school day can contribute to improved readiness to learn, increased concentration and improved wellbeing and behaviour. All of these factors increase the likelihood of improved outcomes overall. SecEd</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Music and instrument lessons All Year 7 pupils learn a musical instrument (woodwind, strings, or brass) as part of their curriculum. PP pupils in upper school are supported to continue with music and instrument lessons into KS4.</p>	<p>Research by Hallam (2015, UCL Institute of Education) found that learning a musical instrument improves self-discipline, concentration, and emotional regulation — skills that are particularly beneficial for pupils experiencing anxiety or low self-esteem. The Royal Society for Public Health (2019) identified music participation as a protective factor for mental wellbeing in young people. Longitudinal studies from the United States (Catterall et al., 2012) show that sustained arts engagement is strongly associated with higher academic attainment, improved attendance, and reduced likelihood of dropout, with the strongest effects seen among pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p>	<p>3 and 4</p>

<p>Student Leadership and student voice We actively encourage PP pupils to join our Student Leadership Team and take part in student voice activities. We make sure that disadvantaged pupils, SEND pupils and young carers are proportionately represented in formal leadership roles.</p>	<p>Research by Rudduck and Flutter (2004) demonstrates that giving pupils a genuine voice in their school experience improves their engagement, motivation, and sense of belonging. The EEF’s guidance on social and emotional learning highlights that developing agency and self-efficacy in disadvantaged pupils is directly linked to improved academic outcomes. Studies on student leadership programmes (Flutter, 2007) show that participation builds communication, confidence, and aspiration, which are key protective factors for pupils from low-income backgrounds. Proportionate representation of disadvantaged groups ensures these benefits are equitably shared.</p>	6
<p>Rewards and recognition scheme We use a range of positive rewards to celebrate good attendance, positive attitudes and community engagement. These include weekly Freddo prizes, Fabulous Friday rewards, half-termly celebration assemblies (linked to our core values, free lunches, ice cream vouchers and end-of-term events. PP pupils are actively encouraged to participate and are prioritised for reward opportunities.</p>	<p>Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory (1985) identifies recognition, competence, and belonging as fundamental drivers of intrinsic motivation. Research by Kern et al. (2016) found that positive reinforcement systems in schools improve pupil wellbeing, reduce behavioural incidents, and strengthen school connectedness — all of which are stronger predictors of attendance and engagement. The EEF’s review of behaviour interventions highlights that consistent, positive reward systems are most effective when they are visible, timely, and culturally relevant to pupils. Prioritising PP pupils for reward opportunities helps counteract negative self-perceptions and builds a growth mindset culture.</p>	6

Total budgeted cost: £211,351

Part B: Review of the previous academic year

Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Where we are now:

We have carefully reviewed the performance of our disadvantaged pupils in the previous academic year. Our findings show that, while we have made some progress, there remains a significant attainment gap that we are determined to close.

Key findings:

- 40% of disadvantaged pupils achieved GCSE Grades 9–4, compared to 53% of non-disadvantaged pupils.
- 19% of disadvantaged pupils achieved Grade 5 or above in both English and Maths — compared to a national figure of 25.8% for disadvantaged pupils.
- Our disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8 score was 28.58, compared to a national average of 34.5 for disadvantaged pupils.
- 60% of all suspensions in 2024/25 involved disadvantaged pupils. Days lost to suspension totalled 248.
- Attendance for disadvantaged pupils in 2025/26 was 84.0%, compared to 87.3% for non-disadvantaged pupils.

What we have done in response:

- All subject faculties have submitted action plans specifically focused on improving outcomes for PP pupils.
- We have reviewed access arrangements to make sure the right exam support is in place.
- We have established a HUB and revision programme for disadvantaged pupils.
- KS4 Raising Attainment and Progress (RAP) meetings now regularly monitor the progress of individual PP pupils across all subjects.
- A structured and monitored intervention has been deployed with the current year 11 with an increase in their Attainment 8 by 2 grades between the two PPE's this year. With the improved belonging and academic support, we will deliver this with our next year 11 cohort to maximise their progress.

Externally provided programmes

Please include the names of any non-DfE programmes that you used your pupil premium (or recovery premium) to fund in the previous academic year.

Programme	Provider
Reading Plus reading intervention	Bedrock
Data Analysis	Go4schools

Service pupil premium funding (optional)

<i>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</i>
The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils

Further information (optional)

<p>Our pupil premium strategy will be further supported by activity that is not being funded by pupil premium or recovery premium. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High quality professional development for subject leaders through specific Head of Department Training sessions during the year.• Improvements to analysis of internal data and the introduction of Subject reviews meetings.• Training for all pupil-facing staff in approaches to managing behaviour.
